Etudes Celtiques

Aspects of the theme of King and Goddess in Irish literature (suite)

Proinsias Mac Cana

Citer ce document / Cite this document :

Mac Cana Proinsias. Aspects of the theme of King and Goddess in Irish literature (suite). In: Etudes Celtiques, vol. 7, fascicule 2, 1956. pp. 356-413;

doi : https://doi.org/10.3406/ecelt.1956.1292

https://www.persee.fr/doc/ecelt_0373-1928_1956_num_7_2_1292

Fichier pdf généré le 23/09/2021

creative commons

ASPECTS OF THE THEME OF KING AND GODDESS IN IRISH LITERATURE *(suite)*

PAR

PROINSIAS MAC CANA

II *A study of several tales relating to the above theme.*

In the first section of this discussion my object was to delineate the character of Mór Muman, with its basically mythological traits, as it can still be perceived through the mantle of historicity with which it was garbed by the early Irish historians and creators of legend. As I have already pointed out, it does not make a great difference to the point of the argument whether or not we hold that Mór Muman existed as such in the first half of the seventh century, although I hold that there is good reason to doubt that she did. The important thing for us is that, positioned as she was in a defined historical period and ambiance, she was the kernel around which took shape an ancient tradition of mythological origin, of which many other versions were already in existence when her story was formed.

The main objection to this argument almost certainly will be that Mór Muman, unlike Medb and numerous other goddesses with whom she may be compared, belongs to the historical period in Ireland's past and is associated with figures whose existence is so attested by annals, genealogies and general tradition that we cannot have the least doubt but that they lived and flourished during the first half of the seventh century. By way of answer I have already tried to show that the historical evidence in support of a seventh century Mór Muman is by no means conclusive,

Persée creative commons

and, even if it were, I hope that the few tales discussed in the following pages will show that the theme I have associated with Mór was one of which the early Irish story-teller understood the implications and, moreover, was one which he would not hesitate to attach to characters, be they historical or unhistorical, which literature and tradition set in the seventh century.

The lost tale known as *Aithed Dige re Laidcnén*

This tale must have been in existence at least as early as the tenth century, since the title is common to saga-lists A and B. It has disappeared, however, leaving only a few faint echoes to guide us in our enquiry after its contents. One of these comes from *Oidheadh Chloinne* nature and *Lir*, at the point where the children are put under Aoife's spell and beg her to set some limit to the duration of their misfortune:

« ... *tabhair tréimse agus ceann dhúinn ar an milleadh tugais orrainn* » (says Fionnghuala).

« *Do-bhéar iomorra* », *ar Aoife*, « *agus is misde dhuit a iarraidh orm .i. nó go gcomhracfaidh an bhean andeas agus an fear adtuaidh .i. Lairgnén mac Cholmáin mic Chobhthaig .i. mac rígh Chonnacht, agus Deoch inghean Fhínghin mic Aodha Alainn, rígh Mumhan*[1].

The name of Fínghen's father, as given here, is obviously the result of the confusion of two well-known names in the mind of the story-teller or scribe, for later in the text

1. Ed. O'Duffy, Soc. for Pres. of Ir. Lang., pp. 8-9 ; cf. pp. 12, 16: « Set some period and limit to the ruin you have wrought upon us ». « I shall indeed », said Aoife, « and you shall be the worse for having asked it, for (it will last) until the woman from the south and the man from the north are united; namely Lairgnén son of Colmán son of Cobthach, that is the son of the king of Connacht, and Deoch, the daughter of the king of Munster, Fínghen son of Aodh Alainn. »

the name of Aodh Alainn is replaced by Aodh Dubh (*op. cit.*, p. 12).

The fulfilment of Aoife's prophecy is described towards the end of the text (*op. cit.*, p. 34 f.): After the termination of their suffering, which had lasted for three periods of three hundred years each, the children of Lir were found by the saintly Mochaomhóg and thenceforth lived with him and his clergy. It happened, however, that Lairgnén son of Colmán son of Cobhthach was at that time king of Connacht, and he had as wife Deoch, the daughter of Fínghen son of Aodh Alainn (*r.* Dubh), king of Munster. When Deoch heard the description of the four swans (i. e. the children of Lir) she was filled with desire for them and asked Lairgnén to get them for her. On his refusing to ask Mochaomhóg for them, she threatened that she would not stay another night unless she got them, and with that she went away. Lairgnén however sent a messenger after her who overtook her only at Cill Dalua. When she returned home, Lairgnén sent word to the saintly man asking for the birds, but did not obtain them. He was greatly angered and came himself to Mochaomhóg, who nevertheless remained adamant. Lairgnén then seized the four birds from the altar, two in each hand, but, as soon as he did so, their covering raiment fell off and in their place were left four withered old figures, three men and a woman.

The immediate importance of these passages for us lies in the fact that the person who composed the history of Clann Lir, when choosing an event well known in the literature with which to synchronize the ending of their misfortune, should have decided upon the coming together of Deoch and Laidcnén, which must in the first place have been the theme of the lost *Ailhed*. For the moment we need not hazard any guess as to the reason for his choice.

The tale of *Oidheadh Chloinne Lir* appears to date from the period extending from the latter half of the fourteenth

century to the end of the fifteenth[1], but there is an earlier echo of the old tale of Deoch and Laidcnén. This comes in the verse of the twelfth century Gilla Modutu, who has left the following lines:

Ornath ben Gúairi mic Colmain
mic Cobthaig colmain (v. comláin) na clíar;
rap í sein Deoch Laidgneain lingil
ingen ard-gér Fhingin fhial[2].

The corresponding passage in the Lecan prose *Banshenchas* is:

Ornat ingen Chuain maic Amalgaid, bean lShechnasaig maic Fhingin.

Deog ingen Fhingin 7 Moiri Muman bean Laidgind maic Colmain, 7 ba bean do Guairi Aidni iarlain[3]

where Deoch is made daughter of Fíngen and Mór Muman, and wife of Laidcenn (of which Laidcnén is merely a diminutive form) and Guaire in turn.

We have already seen that according to OCL Lairgnén was the son of Colmán mac Cobthaig, king of Connacht (and that he himself became king), which would make him a brother of Guaire Aidni. As far as I am aware, however, there is no evidence in the genealogies to confirm this. There is a Laidcnén mac Colmáin (Rawl. B. 502, 117 e 3), but his grandfather is Aed Rón m. Crunnmaíl and he belongs to Síl Cormaic. There is also a Laidcenn m. Colmáin (Rawl. B. 502, 155 a 53) whose grandfather is Bruinnéne m. Murbrind and who pertains to Uí Engusa. These do not appear to have anything to do with the Laidcnén of our tale.

1. Carney, Éigse VI, 107, suggests that OCL could possibly be as late as 1500.

2. Ed. Miss Dobbs, RC XLVII, 308; LL 140 a 35 (References in LL, Lec. etc. are to facsimiles). I translate: « Ornath was the wife of unblemished Guaire of the poetic bands, the son of Colmán mac Cobthaig; she was Deoch of linen-fair (?) Laidgnéan, the noble (modest) keen-witted daughter of Fíngen. »

3. RC XLVIII, 182; Lec. 205 va 36: cf. verse in Lec. 211 a 35.

The statement of OCL that Laidcnén (Lairgnén) became king of Connacht does not stand alone. It is supported by a list of the kings of Connacht (in prose and in verse) in BB. The prose has (57 b 15): *Laidhgnen mac Colmain meic Coblhaigh vii mbl. colorchair iartain do lubra. Guairi Aidhne mac Colmain viii b. xxx 7 a eg* (« L. mac C. m. C. [reigned for] seven years until he died eventually through leprosy (sickness). Guaire A. m. C. [reigned for] thirty-eight years until his death »). The verse, which is attributed to Gilla na Naem ua Duinn (12th cent.), is similar in content (BB 58 b 20), as is also the relevant context in the *Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach*[1]. On the other hand, several earlier lists have Longsech mac Colmáin in place of Laidcnén mac Colmáin[2], while one omits the reign entirely[3].

O'Rahilly has pointed out that the most reliable information about the Connacht Kings comes from the Annals, and he states that the regnal lists mentioned above are all comparatively late and, at least with regard to the fifth and sixth centuries, are frequently found to contradict one another[4]. This must be kept in mind when we recall that no reference is made to the reign of Longsech or Laidcnén in the Annals except for the Clonmacnoise group — and it has been pointed out that the chief representative of this group, the pseudo-Tigernach, has been interpolated from one of the lists[5]. At the same time we

1. Ed. O'Donovan, pp. 312, 92 (The name is here *Lairgneun, Laighnẽn*). Cf. O'Flaherty's *Iar-Connaught*, ed. Hardiman, p. 130.

2. LL 41 a 35; ZCP IX, 462 from poem ed. M. F. Liddell from Rawl. B. 502, 165a and composed before 1156 ; ZCP XIX, 90, in synchronism of kings of Ireland and provincial kings, ed. from three MSS. by Thurneysen.

3. The list in MS. Laud 610, 116 a 2, printed by Kuno Meyer, ZCP IX, 482-3 (under wrong heading). In his article on the Connacht regnal lists Father Paul Walsh states that this is the oldest and most reliable version (Journal of Galway Arch. Soc. XVII, 128).

4. Hist. & Myth., p. 396 f.

5. Cf. Mac Neill, Ériu VII, 40: O'Rahilly, Hist. & Myth., 396 n. 2. For the entries see RC XVII, 194 ; CS, p. 95 ; ACl, p. 107. In MS. H. 1. 18 of CS the word *lepra* is added by the scribe to the notice of Laidcnén's death.

need not infer that the inclusion of the reign in the regnal lists is without authenticity, for the Annals do not preserve a complete catalogue of the provincial kings — this applies particularly with regard to the reigns of certain kings about which there was an element of doubt or disagreement for one reason or another (cf. p. 379 inf.).

It is possible therefore, that the reign in question is historical. But if this be so, the evidence seems to point strongly to a king named Longsech, who was son of Colmán and brother of Guaire, rather than to one named Laidcnén. How and why can this substition — if such it is — have taken place? There is indeed a certain similarity between the two names; enough perhaps to suggest the possibility of their association, although in itself scarcely sufficient to warrant their confusion. I think we must look elsewhere for the explanation.

We have already seen that Deoch, who according to the Lec. prose *Banshenchas* was daughter of Fíngen mac Aeda and Mór Muman[1], is reputed to have been first the wife of Laidcnén and later of Guaire, who succeeded the former as king of Connacht. It is scarcely necessary to point out that this discloses to us a striking initial resemblance between the pattern of the lost tale of Deoch and that of the known history of her mother, Mór Muman[2]. Does the resemblance go any deeper?

As I have indicated above (p. 359) in my translation of Gilla Modutu's lines, these can only be construed as an identification of Deoch, Laidcnén's wife, with Órnat(h), Guaire's wife. This explains why Gilla Modutu does not state, like the Lecan prose, that Deoch was later the wife

1. There is no mention of Deoch in the story of Cuanu and Mór Muman discussed above (p. 78 ff.), ed. O'Nolan, R. I. A. Proc., 30 C, 262. It says that Mór was with Fíngen till she bore him a son, Sechnasach, and that Fíngen died thereafter: cf. however *Imthechta na dá nÓinbhidhe*, where Mór supposes that the child in her womb may be a daughter, later to become Comdán's wife (I cannot consult the MS., which is R. I. A., B IV I, and I cite from C. Ó. Cadhlaigh, Guaire an Oinigh, p. 126.

2. Cf. p. 76 ff. *supra*.

of Guaire — he had already said it in the reference to Ornat (h). It also explains why the prose *Banshenchas* in MS. D. 2. 1 (R. I. A.), in omitting all mention of Deoch (it also omits mention of Laidcnén), speaks of *Órnait, daughter of Fíngen mac Aeda Duib, wife of Guaire Aidne*[1]. It is clear then that to these various redactors, the names Deoch and Órna(i)t referred to the same character in literary tradition. At least that is the meaning they drew from their sources.

Now, in the Lecan prose (p. 359, *supra*) Deoch is immediately preceeded by Órnat, the daughter of Cúán mac Amalgaid and the wife of Sechnasach mac Fíngin. The occurrence in Lecan of this Órnat, of different parentage, in the place allotted to the similarly named daughter of Fíngen (+ 619 AI) and wife of Guaire (+ 663 AU, AI) in Gilla Modutu's poem in LL is sufficient cause to warrant further examination. We find that the LL poem does include Órnat daughter of Cúán, but somewhat later[2] and among names which belong to the eighth century, whereas Cúán, whom the Munster regnal lists include as king of that province, died in 641 according to AI. This suggests that the latter Órnat has been displaced from her proper place in the LL verse, in order to draw a clear distinction between the two namesakes[3].

But was the distinction original or was it latterly contrived? We begin to perceive how complicated this question is when we realize that the husband of Cúán's daughter Órnat was Sechnasach, the son of Fíngen mac Aeda and Mór Muman (cf. p. 6, n. 1 *supra*), which means that she herself was sister by marriage to the other Órnat — if we are to accept the account in *Banshenchas*. Yet, for

1. RC XLVIII, 222.

2. RC XLVII, 309 ; LL 140 b 13: *Cuan mac Amalgaid arnaid, Ornath a ingen in duind ; ba ben fhir echrasaig mingil, Shechnasaig mic Fhingin uill.*

3. In the later versions the redactors have apparently found all this complication somewhat beyond them: cf. RC XLVIII, 182 and 185 (Lecan prose); and *op. cit.*, 222 and 224 (prose in D. 2. 1).

the most part, we must accept it, for it is not without independent confirmation.

In *Sanas Cormaic* the following poetic dialogue occurs:

GUAIRE: *Cian ó thibi do gáire, is ar náire*[1] *fri doini,*
alchiu for indaib t'abrat, is tind galgat
[nochoini.

ÓRNAIT[2]: *Dethbir dam ceni antais adám abrail di*
[bréissi,
ni bad failid Laidgnén clam cid é maras
[larm éissi[3].

One is immediately struck by the parallel these lines offer to the lament (also set in verse) of Mór Muman for her dead husband, Fíngen mac Aeda, and the reproach uttered by her living husband Cathal mac Finguine (*r.* mac Aeda) because of her too enduring affection for the deceased king (cf. p. 79 *supra*). It would appear then that Órnait stood in the same relationship to the two Connacht kings as did Mór Muman to the two Munster kings: that she was Laidcnén's wife, and that after his death she became the wife of Guaire, who was his successor in the kingship of Connacht; that she mourned Laidcnén's death unduly in the eyes of her second husband and was therefore rebuked by him, and that finally she became reconciled to her new situation.

1. Meyer (see *infra*) reads *ar n-aire*, but Professor Myles Dillon has kindly suggested reading *ar náire*, citing in support *a náire fri maith*, Passions and Homilies, ed. Atkinson, l. 8228. Although the usage is not strictly parallel in the two instances the suggested reading gives a better translation and is almost certainly correct.

2. *Órnat* is diminutive of *ór* (gold) i. e. *ór* + *nat*. Within the O. I. period the nom. of the diminutive suffix is frequently replaced by dat. or acc. form-*nait*.

3. Ed. Meyer, Bruchstücke § 95; *Sanas Cormaic* s. v. *breisiu* (§ 180), *galgat* (§ 726), ed. Stokes and O'Donovan, pp. 26, 90. Translation :
Guaire: It is long since you have laughed, while we are shamed before men. I see it on the tips of your eyelashes, painful is the loss which you lament.
Órnait: It were only right, if my eyelashes ceased not to drop tears; Laidgnén the leper would not be joyful, it if were he who survived me.

But this seems to be essentially the pattern upon which the story of Deoch was constructed. We know from the title of the lost tale and from OCL that Deoch was married to Laidcnén, king of Connacht, and from the *Banshenchas* that she was also reputed to have been Guaire's wife[1]. The *Aithed Dige re Laidcnén* was in existence at least as early as the tenth century, and, since Cormac's quotation is obviously either taken directly from a story (which seems extremely likely) or alludes to one, there must have existed such a story about Órnat, Laidcnén and Guaire at the beginning of the tenth century or earlier. Thus, it would appear, we must assume that by the tenth century, if not before, there existed two very similar tales with the same principal characters, except for Órnat and Deoch, or else we must assume that even at that period these two names were known to refer to the same character and therefore interchangeable. To reconcile these two assumptions does not, however, present any great difficulty, for it is a mark of the goddess-theme discussed above in relation to Mór Muman (p. 76 ff., *supra*), that the names as well as the parentage of the principal female characters figuring in the adaptations of the theme are in no wise constant. Later I shall adduce other evidence to show that a tale based on the goddess-theme could exist in several versions which resembled one another closely and differed mainly in that the heroine bore different names or was given different parentage (See pp. 381, 399 f. inf.). We must conclude therefore that there were in existence at the same time two versions of the same story telling how a Munster princess became the wife of two Connacht

1. It must be admitted that the Lecan prose, which makes Deoch wife of both kings, might be merely simplifying the equation of Deoch and Órnat as found in the LL metrical version and thereby making Guaire, as well as Laidcnén, husband of the former. Yet, I see little to support this possibility, for there seems to be no reason to suppose that the Lecan prose relies for its material solely on the LL version. Note the retention by the former text of Órnat d. of Cúán in the proper position.

kings in succession[1]. In one of these versions the princess was identified as Deoch, the daughter of Fíngen mac Aeda and Mór Muman; in the other as Órnat, daughter of Cúán mac Amalgaid.

It follows from this that the theme itself was not readily amenable to change once it had taken on the lineaments of an independent adaptation. The element which altered most easily was the name and parental affinities of the heroine, and this corresponds completely with the fact that Irish tradition and folklore frequently endow the same goddess with different names and different surroundings. Therefore, in the story, or stories, of Órnat and Deoch we have a parallel to — and possibly to some extent a derivative of — the history of Mór Muman. Perhaps the late text OCL preserves a hint of the meaning of Deoch's marriages when it calls Lairgnén son of the king of Connacht before his marriage, but king of Connacht after it (see p. 357 f. *supra*).

With regard to the contents of the lost *Aithed Dige re Laidcnén* we have little to guide us apart from the information noted above. It is possible that Deoch, like her mother, underwent a derangement and wandered far and wide over the country before reaching the house of the king of Connacht. It is true that, except for the example offered by the Mór Muman story, this is mere speculation, but it is interesting to recall that according to James Carney's argument OCL is, to a large extent, based upon *Buile Suibhne*[2]. Now, the most striking feature of the latter tale is, of course, Suibhne's derangement, while Mór's derangement has almost equal importance in her story. It is just possible, therefore, that the writer of OCL, while drawing upon *Buile Suibhne*, introduced Deoch because Suibhne's *geltacht* called to his mind a

1. Cf. p. 364, n. 1 *supra*.
2. Éigse VI, 102 ff.

similar episode in her story,and because she was associated with the king of Connacht[1].

This does not, however, bring us to the end of the complications presented by the names and traditions we have been examining. In the beautiful lyric poem of the dialogue between King Guaire and his brother, Marbán the hermit, we again come upon the names of Laidcnén and Órnait. Marbán there reflects that only six of his *comolta* remain alive: Órnait, Lugna, Laidgén, Ailirán, Marbán (himself?) and Cluithnechán[2]. He bequeaths his pet sow and other possessions to *Laidgén lobhor* (L. the leper), whom he appears to describe as a *dílhrebach* or hermit[3]. Meyer translates *comolta* in the normal way as *foster-brothers*, but in this context it probably denotes the relationship existing between those who share the eremitical way of life.

The Laidcnén of the Marbán poem is identified by Meyer, following O'Donovan, with Laidcenn (Laidcnén), the son of Baeth Bannach, who was a monk of Cluain Ferta Molua and who died in the year 661 (AU 660, ...7 *Laidhggen sapiens mac Baith Bannaigh defuncli sunt*)[4]. His name is perpetuated by his abridgement of the *Moralia* of Gregory

1. According to the conclusions arrived at by Carney, the immediate object in introducing characters such as Deoch and Laidcnén into OCL was to provide a parallel to Mongán and Muirghil of *Buile Suibhne* (*op. cit.*, p. 105 f.). The Mochaomhóg of OCL is probably Mochaomhóg of Liath Mór, who according to AU died in 656. His life begins, *Beatissimus abbas Mochoemog de provincia Connactorum* —, V. SS. Hib. II, 164.

2. King and Hermit, ed. Meyer, §§ 3, 4. Meyer dates the composition early in the tenth century.

3. *Rochluinis mo tiomna-sa frie húair techla don domun: mo qhúach-sa din dit[h]rebach, mo chráin do Laidgén lobhor, Mo scian is mo spedudhud, ma trebad i Túoim Aidhc[h]i, mo lourc, mo chráin, mo cúach, mo tiag lethoir, mo cairche.* Translated by Meyer: « Thou hast already heard my bequest at the hour of leaving the world: This cup of mine to the hermit, my household pet to Laidgén the leper. My knife and my *spetugud* (?), my dwelling in Tuaim Aidchi, my cudgel, my pet, my cup, my leathern satchel, my musical instrument. »

4. *Op. cit.*, p. 9 ; notes to *Bruchstücke* § 95.

the Great, a lengthy commentary on the Book of Job which enjoyed great popularity during the Middle Ages[1]. It is clear from the title of *sapiens* (Ir. *ind ecnai*) given to him in the Annals that his learning was no less renowned in Ireland than abroad. This mark of distinction he holds in common with Ailirán (Airerán), whose obit occurs in AU at the year 664 (= 665), and who appears to have died as a result of the great plague of that year. What makes this relevant to our discussion is that Meyer identifies the Ailirán of the annals, the author of several well known works in Latin[2], with his namesake of the Marbán poem.

Obviously this latter identification must be judged together with that of Laidcenn (Laidcnén), which appeared to Gougaud as without much foundation[3]. It seems to me, however, that to reject these identifications is to be forced to accept a very remarkable coincidence. On the one hand we find two characters associated together in a hermit poem which places them in the same chronological context as Guaire Aidni; on the other, two eminent historical figures of Christian learning in Ireland who bear the same names, are joined by their reputation, the nature of their work and the fact that they were contemporaries, and whose obits fall close to that of Guaire (Guaire +662 AU;

1. He is also credited with the authorship of the *Lorica* of Gildas. Gougaud and others rejected this ascription, but Thurneysen upheld it. See Gougaud, RC XXX, 37 ff., where he gives a comprehensive account of our knowledge of Laidcenn ; the same writer's note in Féil-Sgribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill, p. 323 f.; Kenny ,Sources, pp. 278f., 270ff. ; Miss C. O'Rahilly, Ireland and Wales, p. 98; Colgan, Acta SS. Hib., p. 57f. In Fél. Œng. and the other martyrologies Laidcenn is commemorated under, Jan. 12.

2. In the notes later added to Fél. Œng., where he is commemorated on Aug. 11 as well as on Dec. 29, he is twice called *fer léighinn* of Cluain Iraird and brought into connection with Tech Aireráin in Meath. He is also associated with Cluain Dolcáin and even made abbot of Tamlachta, which is impossible ,since this monastery was not founded until the following century. See Kenney, Sources, p. 279 ff.; L. Gougaud, Féil-Sgribhinn Eóin Mhic Néill, p. 322.

3. RC XXX, 37 n. 4.

Laidcenn +660 AU; Ailirán +664 AU — to each of which one year must be added for the correct dating)[1]. Moreover, it can scarcely be argued that such a borrowing of names would be strange to the spirit of hermit poetry, which, in the final analysis, is but the turning to lyric guise of certain developments in the history of the Irish church[2].

However, once we accept the identification of Marbán's Laidcnén and the Laidcenn of the Annals etc. — which identification, it may be stressed, is in no way necessary to the main tenor of our discussion of the Órnat (Deoch) story — we must also identify this latter with the hero of the lost *Aithed*, who is shown to be the same as his namesake of the hermit poem by his association with Órnat and Guaire and by the fact that both are called *lobor* or *clam* (leper). Therefore, it would appear that a historical personage of the first half of the seventh century was absorbed into Irish literature as a brother of Guaire and his predecessor in the kingship of Connacht.

The regnal lists discussed above would give us to understand that his name was substituted for an historical king, Longsech mac Colmáin, and perhaps the similarity

1. Meyer, also points out appositely ‚Bruchstücke § 95 notes, that the Marbán poem, after mentioning Laidcnén and Ailirán together, describes them both as being engaged in their learning (*atá cechtar de fri[a] dán)*. The one point of doubt that I can see is an entry in AU *s. a.* 658 (= 659): *7 iugulatio Orcdoith mic Sechnusaigh 7 Concenn mic Laidhgnein 7 Flodubuir rex Francorum.* I cannot identify the first two of these, but their father's names, whether by coincidence or otherwise, are the same as those of Ornat's historical husband (according to the *Banshenchus*) and her husband in the tale.

2. The copy of the *Lorica* of Gildas in the *Book of Nunnaminster* (Harl. 2965) states that Laidcenn wrote it in a year of pestilence (*Hanc luricam Lodgen in anno periculoso constituit, et alii dicunt quod magna sit virtus eius, si ter in die ca[ntatur]*. This, Gougaud suggests, was inspired by the *mortalitas huius anni* of the text of the *Lorica*. Perhaps we might see in this the origin of the description of the other Laidcnén as *lobar* and *clam* (assuming that the man of learning was not in fact a leper, because he is not mentioned as such). Cf. the entry in AU *s. a.* 553: *Pestis* (gl. *.i. lepra*) *que vocata est in samhthrosc.*

between the names had something to do with this development. Evidently the intrusion of Laidcnén's name among the kings of Connacht is bound up essentially with the story of his love for Órnat (Deoch), and to that extent it confirms my suggestion that this is one of a number of tales which are adaptations of an old myth, of which the story-tellers fully appreciated the significance, even though they may have realized that in its origins it conflicted with their own beliefs. The apparent acceptance of opposites, of which this is an example, is one of the most striking characteristics of the literature produced in early Christian Ireland.

With regard to Órnat, it is not easy to fit the various references into their proper places in order to give a definite picture. The Marbán poem appears to presuppose the existence of a tale bringing Órnat within the orbit of Guaire and Laidcnén, but it also seems to acknowledge the original identity of Laidcnén by associating him with Ailirán. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that the storyteller, probably a cleric, who composed the poem about the early tenth century, knew the story of Laidcnén and Órnat (Deoch) and also the background of the historical Laidcenn (Laidcnén), and made use of both, but this is to simplify the matter unduly, since there almost certainly existed other earlier texts in which these names occurred and which have now been lost. In any case it would appear more consonant with our knowledge were we to suppose, as an intermediate stage, the existence of some early text bringing the learned Laidcenn within Guaire's circle, rather than to assume that the former was translated directly from the character of a historical monastic scholar to that of a king and lover defined and delimited only by the requirements of literature and tradition. Yet, as against that, it must be admitted that judgements based upon consideration of reason and consistency, without more tangible evidence, will not always give us the correct solutions to problems arising in early Irish literature.

We have seen that there must have existed two versions of the story of Laidcnén — one with Órnat as his partner, the other with Deoch. The latter is probably as historical — or unhistorical — as her mother, Mór Muman[1]; the former may in fact have been the daughter of Cúán mac Amalgaid and husband of Sechnasach mac Fíngin as we have inferred from the *Banshenchas*. Whether they are historical or fictional, and whether or not there are fragments of history in their story, it seems fairly clear that the story-tellers set their material in a mould or pattern which was not of their invention and which was more important than the facts it may have contained.

The lost tale known as *Aithed Muirne re Dub Ruis* and the romance of Mis and Dub Ruis.

That the tale of Muirenn[2] and Dub Ruis was already in existence in the course of the tenth century is confirmed by the inclusion of the title *Aithed Muirne re Dub Ruis* in both lists A and B. There does not appear to be now in existence any tale corresponding precisely to that title. Nevertheless an amount of relevant material has been brought to light in recent years, in the first place by an article of O'Rahilly's[3], from which I draw considerably

1. Is it mere coincidence that Deoch is so close semantically to Medb, the name by which the outstanding example of the allegorical myth is known (O Máille and O'Rahilly construe it as « the intoxicating one »; Thurneysen gives it a passive meaning)? Cf. O'Rahilly on the importance of the libation, Ériu XIV, 14 ff.; also p. 77 ff. *supra*.

2. I take this as nominative, although the form Muirne — presumably from the gen. of Muirenn — is probably commoner in later texts. Thus O'Rahilly translates the above title as « The Elopement of Muirne with Dub Ruis », Celtica I, 384. Cf. Murphy, Duanaire Finn III, 382, index *s. v. Muirne*.

3. « Lost Legends of Mis and Dub Ruis ». Celtica I, 382.

in the next few pages[1], and, secondly, by the publication of a hitherto unknown Mod. Ir. text by Brian O Cuív[2]. It is the scattered material discussed by O'Rahilly that I shall deal with first.

In the Dindshenchas of Sliab Mis, the mountain-range between Tralee and Killarney in Co. Kerry, we are told that it was named after Mis, the daughter of Mairid mac Caireda and wife of Coemgen Conganchnes[3], but we have evidence of another tradition which made this same Mis the daughter of Dáire. In the MS. history of Kerry attributed to Friar O'Sullivan of Muckross Abbey and compiled about 1750, the author offers the information that the mountain was « so named as by tradition from a distracted woman of great strength and activity called Misna Dairi, who proved a great enemy and hindrance to passengers in this mountain during her reign of it »[4]. She is named by Piaras mac Gearailt in a poem written in 1722 as one of the outstanding *mná sí* of Ireland *(Mis ní Dáire, Gráinne is Aoife)*[5], a reference which is echoed almost word for word some fifty years later by Eoghan Ruadh O Súilleabháin *(Mis inghean Dáire, Gráinne is céile)*[6]. The latter says elsewhere of the lady seen in an *aisling:*

Ba bhinne séis a tana-ghuib
Ná fuinneamh méar ag spreagadh puirt,
'S ná cruit an té do threascair Mis...[7]

1. I had collected some of his references before the publication of the article in question, but most of them were new to me.

2. Celtica, II, 325.

3. Met. D. III, 240 ; RC XV, 445. This may be a late fabrication, the more so since it mentions the migration of Eochu mac Maireda and his brother Ri as if it was an integral part of the story of Mis, and therefore — at least in its Dindshenchas form — it must be later than the tale of Loch Rí (Met. D. III, 450; RC XV, 481; Folklore IV, 474), which occurs first in the Met. D. and is almost certainly copied from the tale of the eruption of Loch nEchach (Met. D. IV, 62 l. 65 ff.: also RC XVI, 150; Folklore IV, 474).

4. Jrnl., Cork Hist. Soc., 1900, p. 96.

5. Amhráin Ph. Mhic Gearailt, ed. O Foghludha, l. 1834.

6. Amhráin E. R. Uí Shúilleabháin, ed. Ua Duinnín, l. 2170.

7. *op. cit.*, l. 375.

and these lines also are a near counterpart to a passage in the work of an earlier poet, Eoghan an Mhéirín Mac Carthaigh[1]. In A IV. 2 (R. I. A.), fo. 66a, Eoghan an Mhéirín's allusion bears the gloss, .i. *Dubh Ruis lear tugadh Mis ní Dāire Dhōidghil chum cēille*, from which O'Rahilly inferred that « the frenzied Mis was restored to reason by the harp-music of Dubh Ruis ».

Dubh Ruis may also have been called Cú Dhubh, for one poem mentions *éachl Con Duibhe bhuaidh Mis* (« the feat of Cú Dubh who won Mis »)[2]. Aodhagán O Rathaille speaks of a place called *Léim Con Duibhe*[3], which O'Rahilly identifies with Leamcon *(Léim Con)* near Skull, in the south-west of Co. Cork, suggesting that it has been named from some great leap performed by Cú Dhubh.

Apart from these scattered references we have an elegy on Dubh Ruis, beginning *Dubh Ruis do ba ríoghdha a ghnúis*[4]. This describes the hero as *mac Dubháin mheic Cealltchair* (§ 12). Since it associates him with Ros Ailithre (i. e. Rosscarbery, between Clonakilty and Skibbereen), O'Rahilly takes this to be the *Ros* from which Dub Ruis got his name, which is doubtful, since, as we shall see below, his main associations are with an area in Limerick rather than in Cork. It also refers to him as *an coileán con* (§ 10), which, as O'Rahilly suggests, may be an allusion to his alternative name, Cú Dhubh. In § 9 we are told that Dub Ruis used to go feasting in the vicinity of Sliab Mis *(Do theaymaois d'ól meadha mhais ... go sochraoibh*

1. Eoghan an Mhéirín Mac Carrthaigh, ed. O Foghludha, p. 40 l. 17 :

Ba bhinne a séis caorghuib ba mhilse glór
Ná cruit an té thraoch Mis le draíocht a cheoil.

« The music of her red-lipped mouth, of the sweetest sound, was more melodious than the harp of the man who subdued Mis with the magic of his playing. »

2. ITS III, 1st. ed., 220. In the second edition (see *ibid.* p. v) the editors omit the poem containing this reference on the score that it is not part of O Rathaille's work.

3. ITS III, 1st ed., p. 130 ; 2nd. ed., p. 132.

4. Ed. Mc Kenna, Poems of Aonghus Fionn O Dálaigh, p. 75 ff.

Sléibhe Mis, re chéile is tuir ro-chaoin Rois) and it is possible that his famous leap is referred to in the following quatrain (§ 19), which mentions Mis, daughter of Dáire:

Inghean Dáire do dhréim ris
gur bhean léim Máighe do Mhis;
torrchadh ban Gabhra dá ghreis
ba geis don lon chalma chlis[1].

O'Rahilly comments that the meaning of *léim Máighe* is obscure[2], but I cannot understand why, unless it be that he has already identified a place in Cork as the site of the hero's leap and consequently feels that it can have nothing to do with the river Máigh in Co. Limerick[3]. Nevertheless, that it is this river-name which occurs in the poem is shown by the fact that it is used in close connection with a reference to the district of Gabhair, also in Co. Limerick, and we shall see later that this agrees with whatever additional information we can gather about Dub Ruis.

The earliest MS. of the poem belongs to the seventeenth century, but Dr. Eleanor Knott has suggested that its history does not begin there and that it may be « a fragment of some romance with poems interspersed »[4]. This is supported by O'Rahilly who points to the corrupt nature of the copies of what was originally a poem in strict metre, and conjectures that the MS. tradition was broken and that the extant versions derive from an early seventeenth

1. « Dáiré's daughter sought (expected) him, so that he leaped across the Máigh for Mis; that the women of Gabhair should be pregnant by him (?) was taboo to the valiant and accomplished ousel ». Because of the allusive manner of the poem and the corrupt nature of the extant copies, the interpretation of some lines must be tentative and uncertain.

2. He points out that *béim mbáighe*, or *mbáidhe*, would also be possible metrically.

3. Or perhaps he hesitates to adopt the expression *gur bhean léim* with the meaning here given to it. But such a usage is paralleled by the Mod. I. *gearraim léim*, « I jump ».

4. Mc Kenna, Poems of Aonghus Fionn O Dálaigh, p. 83.

century text which was written down from memory.

If, however, as seems probable, the literary « romance with poems interspersed » was lost during the sixteenth or seventeenth century, we are all the more fortunate in possessing a version of the tale of Mis and Dub Ruis which appears to contain much of the matter of the earlier romance. The version in question was discovered by Brian Ó Cuív in two MSS. in St. Patrick's College, Maynooth[1], and edited by him in Celtica II, 325 ff. It is with his kind permission that I quote here his summary of the story:

Dáire Dóidgheal (or Dáire Mór) came to conquer Ireland, but was defeated in the Battle of Ventry. His only daughter Mis, went to seek his body in the battlefield, and having found it she began to drink the blood from the wounds so that she became mad and fled to Sliabh Mis where she stayed for seven score years (aliter three hundred years). Her hair grew so long that it used to sweep the ground behind her, and the nails of her fingers and toes grew so much that she used to tear every human being or animal whom she would meet.

As a result of her madness Mis could run like the wind, and thus she could catch up with anything she wished, and when she killed an animal or a human being she would consume as much as she wished of their flesh and blood. Thus that part of the country known as the Barony of Clanmaurice became a deserted wilderness, for Feidhlime Mac Criomthain, King of Munster, issued a proclamation that Mis should not be killed, and he had promised a great reward, together with the rent of that barony, to whoever would bring her into custody alive.

Many people who attempted that task were killed by Mis. At last Dubh Ruis, king Feidhlime's harper,

1. The first copy is in Murphy MS. 58, pp. 50-7, and was written in 1769 by Piaras Mac Gearailt, from whose work comes one of the references to Mis cited above; the second, in Murphy MS. 6, pp. 417-23, was written in 1818 by Micheál Óg Ó Longáin and was not taken from the earlier MS.

said that he would go to her with his harp, and he asked for some gold and silver which was necessary for his plan. Having got this he proceeded to Sliabh Mis, to the spot where he thought he might encounter Mis, and he laid his cloak on the ground, and having placed the gold and silver on it he sat down and began to play the harp. Mis, being attracted by the music, approached and questioned Dubh Ruis about the harp and the gold and silver, and memories of her father began to come to her. Further questions by Mis gave Dubh Ruis an opportunity for having sexual intercourse with her — an experience which he considered might help to restore her reason.

Next Dubh Ruis asked for food, and Mis quickly brought him a deer. Her instinct was to tear it asunder and to eat it thus, but Dubh Ruis restrained her, and having killed and skinned the deer, he cooked it in a pit filled with boiling water. All this again reminded Mis of her father, and she quietly sat down and ate the meat together with some bread which Dubh Ruis had brought with him.

When they were finished their meal, Dubh Ruis stood Mis into the pit of warm water, and proceeded to clean her. He then prepared a bed and the two of them spent the night together. He stayed with her for two months until her reason was restored, and until the hair which had covered her body was all gone. He then dressed her in suitable raiment and brought her to his home where he married her, and she gave him four children, 'and she was one of the beautiful accomplished women of her time in Munster'.

However on one occasion when Dubh Ruis went to collect the rent of the Barony of Clanmaurice, he was attacked and killed by warriors of that district, and so it was that Mis composed these verses of lament over his body.

The earlier text of the tale opens with a sentence which adheres to the usual formula for introducing a poem: *Mis inghean Dáire Dhóidgheal ccl. ag caoine a céile* 7 *a*

compáin .i. Dubh Ruis. It then goes on to explain her grief by relating the events of the story and finally returns to the starting point, the death of Dubh Ruis, which calls forth the lament already indicated by the opening sentence of the text. It seems clear from the rather inappropriate phrasing of the opening that the extant version of the story existed independently of the poem[1], perhaps in oral tradition, until some scribe combined them by inserting the tale after the introductory formula of the poem[2]. It is a matter of doubt how much of the early tale with which the elegy was connected is reflected in the modern tale. Evidently the former contained the incident of the leap (cf. p. 373, *supra*), but that is completely absent in the latter. For the rest, the poem contains little evidence upon which to base a comparison, although it may be remarked that there is a great distinction between its hero and the Dubh Ruis of the prose tale — a distinction which may be explained through the popular nature of the modern text. Opposed to the humble musician who surprised his king by proposing to capture the savage Mis, the poem describes a hero who was kingly in appearance *(do ba rioghdha a mhais)*, who was comparable to Guaire in generosity, who was the son of the queen of Ros (... *meic rioghna Rois*) and who was, at one and the same time, warrior and sage and poet[3]. This is sufficient to stress

1. Cf. the independent text of the poem in 23 K 31, p. 232 (19 th cent.), where it is headed *Mis inghean Dhaire Dhoidghil ccl. ag caoine Dhuibh Ruis. i. a compánach.*

2. In the later text of the story the beginning is changed slightly to render it more suitable to its context: *Scéal air Mhis inghean Dáire dá dheimhniúgha cionnas do chaoin si a céile 7 a compánach.*

3. Meyer has printed in Sitzungsber. der preuss. Akad. der Wissenschaft, 1919, p. 98, a quatrain atrributed to a poet called Dub Ruis from H. 3. 18, 82b:

Garbae adbae innon fil, i llomrat fir maiche mess,
i n-agat laichliu i léss, i llúaid mná trogain tress.

This he translates as: « Rauh sind die Stätten, an denen wir sind, wo Männer eine Ernte von Kopfen abscheren, wo sie junge Kälber in die Hürde treiben, wo Rabenweibchen Kampf führen. »

how greatly the lost tale of Dub Ruis and Mis may have differed from the extant one[1].

Whatever be the extent of the similarities which the modern tale bears to the literary text which probably existed before the sixteenth century, there is no reason to doubt that the former preserves old material which has undergone little basic alteration. It provides a very clear example of the frenzy-element which I have discussed with regard to the story of Mór Muman. In both cases the heroine is deranged and flies off to the wilderness, where she remains until the encounter and sexual intercourse with her destined husband restore her to her senses[2]. Like Mór (see p. *supra*) Mis has the power of levitation (... *gur imthig fá dheoig air faoidhe foluamhuin le fiabhrus geallachuis go Sliabh Mis)* and, in addition, we are told that feathers and hair grew to a great length on her body *(... gur fhás clúmh 7 gruaig chómh fada san uirlhe go mbiodh ag slíobadh na talmhun iona dheadhaig).* This is not told of Mór Muman, so that it is not certain whether it was an element in the native theme from which the stories of Mór and Mis derive, or whether the latter tale has borrowed it from *Buile Shuibhne* or other such

1. One of the obstacles to making comparisons is the difficulty of interpreting precisely the allusions in the elegy. For example, it contains no obvious mention of the period of madness undergone by Mis, yet it is possible to see a reference to it in the quatrain quoted on p. 17, *supra*, if we translate the first two lines as « The daughter of Daire contended with him, so that he leaped across the Maigh for Mis ». This recalls the power of levitation possessed by the mad or frenzied person, and these lines could refer to a feat performed by the sane Dub Ruis in order to gain control of the deranged Mis. I am not, however, putting this forward as the correct interpretation.

2. In the case of Mor Muman I have stressed the importance of the *feis* or intercourse (p. 88 *supra*) although the text does not dwell on the connection between it and Mór's return to sanity (That section I wrote before I became acquainted with O Cuiv's tale of Mis and Dub Ruis). This interpretation is amply confirmed by the Mod. I. text, which lays great emphasis upon the efficacy of the physical intercourse and in fact represents it as the main hinge on which the story turns.

texts which represent the conception of the « wild or deranged forest-dweller » probably introduced from Britain (see p. 80, *supra*). I have earlier noted (pp. 88-9 *supra*) the statement that Mór was the standard to which every excellent woman in Ireland was compared, and in the later tale we find the corresponding, though less absolute, statement that Mis « was one of the beautiful accomplished women of her time in Munster » *(go raibh air mhnāibh āille ilbhéasacha na Mumhan le a linn).*

Now, if the tale of Mis and Dubh Ruis does really constitute a fairly close parallel to that of Mór Muman, and if my conclusions with regard to the latter are correct, then we should perhaps expect the hero to be considered somewhere or other as a candidate for the kingship of Munster. Yet the modern tale describes Dubh Ruis merely as the harper[1] of Feidhlime mac Criomthain, the king of Munster. It occurred to me that his name might be included in some of the regnal lists, but my subsequent search seemed to prove otherwise, until I took note of a hitherto unpublished poem (beginning *Oilill Ōlom, amra in gein)* attributed, probably correctly, to Cormac mac Cuilennáin (+ 908) and containing a partial list of the Munster kings in which Dub Ruis is included in place of Feidlimid mac Crimthainn (+847), the king with whom he is associated

1. With the description of how he attracted the attention of Mis by his music we might compare the story of Abartach mac Ildathaig of the Tuatha Dé Danann who made use of his music for amorous ends (I intend to publish shortly an account of the literary material relating to this Abartach). Cf.

Nó an gcualabhair cuid dar sheinn
an ti rug ó dhoilbh Doirinn
lér lean sibh an séis bportaigh
ó sin tar éis Abhartaigh? (ed. Bergin, Studies VIII, 612 § 8) Also to be compared is the version of the legend of Labraid Loingsech in which Labraid woos the lady Moriath with the aid of the magical music of Craiphtine the harper (ZCP III, 2 ; RC XX, 166, 431; Ält. ir. Dicht. II, 9: see O'Rahilly, Hist. & Myth., p. 106 ff.). O'Rahilly regards Labraid and Craiphtine as ultimately one and the same (*op. cit.*, p. 110).

in the modern tale[1]. The latter seems to be included in all the other lists but one, the exception being the metrical list edited by O Donnchadha from Rawl. B 502, 163 a 30, etc[2].

It is quite possible that Dub Ruis had in fact some claim to the throne, for it is most likely that the frequent disagreement between the regnal lists is in many cases to be attributed to the dissension arising out of local politics[3]. This is all the more easily appreciated in the case of Dub Ruis, if, as seems to be the case, he did not belong to the Eoganachta[4], who all but monopolized the kingship up to the time when Mathgamain mac Cinnétig (+ 976) of Dál Cais took possession of it. In the poem attributed to Cormac mac Cuilennáin it is stated that seven of the line of Cormac Cas ruled over Munster down to the time of Énda Airgthech. This is echoed in the text on the kings of Dál Cais printed by T. O Donnchadha in An Leabhar Muimhneach (pp. 68-85), and it is worth noting that in the section of An L. Muimhneach which deals with the *senchas* of Dál Cais (*op. cit.*, pp. 53-128) — and which the editor regards as being fairly old in its original form (*op. cit.*, pp. xvii-xx) — there are several quotations allegedly taken from the poems of Cormac

1. An edition of the poem from the Book of Lismore 181 a 10 and other MSS. is to appear shortly.

2. An Leabhar Muimhneach, p. 108 ff. The editor does not mention the copy of this poem in LL 150 ab, where it is attributed to Flann (mac Lonáin?). This copy has a number of variants and omits some of the published quatrains.

3. Cf. O Buachalla, Cork Hist. Soc. Journ., Ser. 2, LVII, 75-6. By way of example, the obit of Olchobar mac Flainn occurs in AU at the year 795 (= 796) and he is there described as the king of Munster, but his name is not included in any of the regnal lists and AI (797) refers to him simply as the abbot of Inis Cathaig. Perhaps his reign was disputed because he belonged not to the Eoganachta, but to the Ui Fidgeinte, who were really Érainn.

4. In the elegy he is called *ua Meic Con is Mhaicniadh mhóir*, which implies that he belonged to the Érainn (cf. O'Rahilly, Hist. & Myth., p. 11 *et passim*.

mac Cuilennáin, and also that one part of the Dál Cais section (*op. cit.*, pp. 109-16) stresses at length and seeks to explain the good relations which existed between Cormac and this people[1].

It would appear from this that Dál Cais tradition regarded Cormac mac Cuilennáin as being favourably disposed towards them, and if the poem attributed to him is really his work, then the tradition is faithful. In any case the evidence suggests that Dub Ruis may have belonged to the tradition of Dál Cais, and this inclines towards the testimony of his elegy (cf. p. 372, *supra*), which associates him with the Máigh in Co. Limerick. In the genealogies there is mentioned a Dub Rois, son of Aengus Tírech, from whom the Uí Duib Rois of the Déis Bec in Co. Limerick were descended and of whom it is said that fourteen kings of his seed reigned over the Déis Bec[2]. This Dub Rois may be an ancestor of his later namesake.

According to Mac Neill the Déis Bec is a later name for the Deis Deiscirt, which as represented in *Vita Trip.* comprises approximately the baronies of Small County, Coshma (= Cois Mágha, i. e. the land beside the river Máigh) and Coshlea. The Déis Deiscirt is so named in relation to In Déis Tuaiscirt, which lies to the north and « was in fact an ancient synonym of Dál Cais »[3]. Originally the latter was of the same kin as the Déis Bec, both being connected in ancestry with the dynastic septs of Déisi Muman. He shows that there was a certain amount of ambiguity as to the scope of these titles, and in the original genealogical scheme the two *Déisi* are included under the general term Dál Cais as descendants of Cormac Cas. Amongst these I can find no Dubh Ruis, whether as the son of Dubhán mac Cealltchair (as he is

1. There is a similar passage in Keating, Foras Feasa, 194-200: cf. Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh, ed. Todd. pp. 55, cviii, n. 3.

2. See Mac Neill's article on the *Vita Tripartita*, Ériu XI, 37f.

3. *loc. cit.*, p. 34 ff.

given in the elegy) or of Raghnall (as in the modern tale), but it is worthy of note that they include several instances of Cú Dubh, which at least shows that the alternative name of Dubh Ruis was not unfamiliar.

So far in this discussion almost all our information comes directly or indirectly from the story of Dub Ruis and Mis, and this story, in the opinion of the several scholars who have written of it, is one of considerable, though undetermined, antiquity. However, as I have already pointed out, it is not this tale which is included in lists A and B, but *Aithed Muirne re Dub Ruis*, « The Elopement of Muirenn with Dub Ruis ». Therefore, there must have existed — possibly side by side, although we have no positive evidence of that — two tales centred on Dub Ruis and based upon the same general theme. This recalls the two tales which associated Laidcnén with Deoch on the one hand and Órnat on the other (cf. p. 364 f. *supra*) and I suggest that the origins of all these tales were similar. The existence of two tales about Dub Ruis is closely connected with the fact that the name of the goddess-heroine was not constant, and that the changes in her name and in her local affinities could be accompanied by changes in the basic story, ultimately giving rise to different versions or even to different tales. Thus, while I suggest that the tales of Mis and Muirenn are really variations of a single tale, I do not necessarily imply that they were closely similar in their narrative detail. For one thing the Mod. Ir. tale could scarcely be called an *Aithed* in the strict sense of the term, since this word (*aith*+*eth-*, « to go », etc.) implies movement, i. e. escaping, eloping, running away from, and so it is probable that there was a considerable difference in the motivation and initial circumstances of *Aithed Muirne re Dub Ruis*[1].

1. Normally it would be unwise to base any such reasoning sôlely on a title occuring in the lists, since the titles are not always clearly relevant to the contents of the tales. With regard to the *Aithid*, however, all the early examples of which we know the contents are aptly described by the title.

On the other hand, the early version of the romance of Mis and Dub Ruis may have been much closer to the *Aithed*, for, as I have noted above, there is reason to believe that the Mod. Ir. tale about Mis does not reflect faithfully all the contents of the earlier version from which it appears to have derived.

The story of Cano mac Gartnáin and other tales.

Among the tales catalogued in list B is one called *Serc Créde do Chanainn mac Gartnáin*, which is either identical with or incorporated in an extant text bearing the end-title *Scéla Cano meic Gartnáin 7 Crédi ingine Guaire*[1]. Thurneysen, who dated the original redaction of this text close to the year 900, favoured the second alternative, but although this is quite likely, it is not necessarily implied by the title of the text for, although it is true that the listed title refers specifically to only a part of the extant tale, it is also true that many of the titles in lists A and B do not reflect fully the contents of the tales to which they have been applied. On the other hand, it is worthy of note that the name *Cano* is declined in the listed title, but not in the text of *Scéla Cano*. If the name has not simply lost its declension in the succession of manuscripts ,this may be taken as evidence that the list refers to an older and possibly more circumscribed tale. I have already mentioned that the title *Serc Créde do Chanainn mac Gartnáin* occurs only in list B, but its absence from A is, I imagine, the result of a scribal error, for it occurs in B in the midst of titles which are found in exactly the same order in A. Its omission is probably due to the similar name occuring in the preceding title,

1. Published by Meyer, Anecd. I, 1; translation and commentary by Thurneysen, Zeit. f. rom. Phil. XLIII, 385. The only copy, that in LBL 128a, is rather imperfect.

Serc Caillige Bérre do Folhad Canann (Canainne). I give below a summary of *Scéla Cano*, setting out the sections relevant to my purpose in somewhat greater detail:

Aedán mac Gabráin and Gartnán mac Aeda meic Gabráin disputed the kingship of Scotland in bloody battles. Gartnán lived in Inis Macu Ché[i]n. Once he hid a cask of gold in an inlet of the sea and killed the men who brought it there for him, so that only he and his wife and his son Cano knew of its whereabouts. Subsequently, on a night in Winter, Aedán came with two thousand men and wrought slaughter and plunder throughout Gartnán's island (which is apparently to be identified with the island of Skye). Cano escaped with a few others, but his father was slain. He went to Ireland to Diarmuid and Bláthmac, the sons of Aed Sláne, who were joint rulers of the country and were at that time in Collmag in Ulster. There he was warmly received and treated with all hospitality.

Meanwhile, it is said, Satan told Aedán where the gold was hidden, and once the latter had got it in his possession he set about using it in an attempt to bring about the death of Cano at the hands of the sons of Aed Sláne. But Cano was informed of this intrigue by the daughter of Diarmait mac Aeda Sláne, who had loved the Scottish hero for his reputation, even before she had seen him (This incident is treated at some length, but the girl is not subsequently mentioned in the text). Thus warned, he went to Diarmait and Bláthmac and told them that he was aware of Aedán's proposal. He explained to them how Aedán had obtained the treasure, and they gave him their promise never to harm him. Later Diarmait had a prophecy from God foretelling that Cano would hold the kingship of Scotland for twenty-four years.

After a feast lasting two days Cano and his followers went off during the night (so that they would no longer be a burden to their hosts, suggests Thurneysen). They proceeded into Connacht to visit Guaire and on their way

came to the house of Marcán, whose wife was Créd[1], Guaire's daughter. She had fallen in love with Cano even before he came from the east (The text adds that Cano had protected her home, when he came with Diarmait to give battle to Guaire, but Cano has no part in the extant versions of *Cath Cairn Chonaill*, which tells of this battle). Créd had a stepson called Colcu who was in love with her, but whose love was not returned by her, and she assured Marcán that Colcu would never win her as long as he (Marcán) lived, while at the same time she confessed her love for Cano. Meanwhile Cano went on to Derlus, where Guaire welcomed him and his company and promised him that he would look after them better than the sons of Aed Sláne had done. Guaire himself occupied one third of the *liss*, Cano another and Senchán Torpéist the *fili* the remaining third. Cano remained there a quarter of a year and then decided to continue his circuit of Ireland. He had heard tell of a valorous man of the province of Munster, Illann mac Scannláin of the Corco Laige, and proposed to visit him. Créd came with Marcán and Colcu to join in the farewell. She begged Guaire to allow her to distribute the drinks and in this way she succeeded in putting a sleep-charm on the gathering so that all except Cano and herself fell asleep. Then she sought to make love to him, but he would not give his consent as long as he was in foreign service. He promised, however, to take her as his wife for ever if he gained the kingship of Scotland, and as a pledge he left a stone which contained his soul. This Créd used to take from its bag every day and gaze at it.

Cano came to Illann mac Scannláin at Dún mBaithe. The latter received him with great hospitality and promised to do better by him than either Guaire or the sons of Aed

1. In Meyers transcription the vowel in this name has no mark of length, and Thurneysen has followed suit in making it short, but that it is really long is shown by the rhymes *Créidi : dēdi* in LL 140 a 42 and *Crēide : féile* in a poem in Measgra Mhichíl Uí Chléirigh, p. 154.

Sláne. For three years he stayed there in great comfort and plenty, and when he finally prepared to return to Scotland it was with deep sorrow he parted from Illann, who foretold that his own death would come within the year after Cano's departure. A year from that day Illann was slain by Mac Connaid and Cuan mac Sanaisi of his own *luath*. At that same time Cano, now king of Scotland, was fishing on the sea when a red wave came into his boat and he recognised it as the blood of Illann. Soon after Cano went to Ireland with a force of Saxons, Britons and Scots and avenged Illann's death.

He had arranged to meet Créd by the year's end at Inber Colptha, but every single day Colcu used to be there with a hundred warriors. They therefore arranged to meet at Loch Créda in the north. Créd went to the appointed place bringing with her the stone, while Cano came from the east in his ship. They were within view of each other when three ships attacked Cano so that he was forced to jump out of his own vessel. When Créd saw his face in the water she killed herself from the rock and the stone broke beneath her body. Cano died nine days later, after returning eastwards to Scotland.

This text, as preserved in LBL, has many minor lacunae and passages of comparative obscurity, and, apart altogether from any basic analysis of its contents, it is clear that it contains an amount of inserted matter. The effect is to render its already sufficiently complicated historical and literary relationships still more difficult. The death of its hero is noticed in the annals by an entry which occurs in AU 688 as: *Occisio Canonn filii Garlnaidh*[1]. With this must be associated two earlier entries in AU, one at 668: *Navigatio filiorum Garlnaidh ad Hiberniam cum plebe Sceth* (i. e. of Skye[2]) and the other at 670: *Venit genus*

1. *Garlnaidh* and *Garlnith* are corruptions of *Garlnait*, which is merely a variant of *Garlnán*, both being diminutives formed with different suffixes.

2. In *Scéla Cano* also Cano belongs to Skye, though it is not made absolutely clear that this is the same as the Inis Macu Chéin mentioned at the beginning.

Gartnait de Hibernia. The family and followers of Gartnait therefore spent two years in Ireland, although no reason is given for their stay. To them Cano must have belonged, and Thurneysen suggests that the story of his experiences in Ireland is an independent echo of this temporary migration or, alternatively, that it is based upon the annals. We can at least be certain that the literary tale and the historical event recorded in the annals are not unconnected.

It is true that the *Scéla Cano* makes its hero stay three years in Munster alone and credits him with a reign of twenty-four years in the kingship of Scotland after his return from Ireland, whereas according to the annalistic account Cano would have stayed only two years in Ireland and would have met his death eighteen years after going back to Scotland. But, as Thurneysen shows, these are not the only points of chronological divergence between our text and the historical records. We are told that Cano is a young man capable of bearing arms during the lifetime of Aedán mac Gabráin (+606 AU), and yet he does not die until 688, when, judging from the story, he is apparently still a young man. We know that the *filii Gartnait* came to Ireland in 668, yet Cano is made to associate with Diarmait and Bláthmac, the sons of Aed Sláne (+604 AU), both of whom died in a pestilence in 665, and with Guaire, who died in 663. And, of course, none of these was contemporary with Aedán.

In BB 149b17 occurs the following genealogy: *Congus mac Consamla maic Conai* (this is to be read as *Canonn*) *Gairb m. Gartnait m. Aedain m. Gabrain.* The emendation, which was suggested by Thurneysen, is warranted by two entries in AU, *Gabail* (« The capture of ») ... *Conamail filii Canonn* (673) and *Iugulatio Conamlo maic Canonn* (705)[1]. When taken in conjunction with the entries from AU already cited, these references give an impression of sustained strife and conflict between Cano's family and

1. It is presumably the daughter of Cano mac Gartnáin whose death is noticed in AU 690: 7 *Choblaith filia Canonn moritur.*

certain unnamed enemies. If it was the memory or the bare record of some of the events in the history of this rivalry which provided a historical basis for the story of Cano, it is quite clear, as we have seen already, that that basis is of the most insubstantial, judging from the extant text of *Scéla Cano*. When Cano is there made to succeed Aedán in the kingship of Scotland, it is in contradiction to the historical records, which give Eochaid Buide, Aedán's son, as his successor. And what appears to be a still more blatant distortion, or remoulding, of the facts is the distinction which *Scéla Cano* draws between Aed, the father of Gartnán, and Aedán, the latter's enemy. Aed and Aedán are here represented as two different sons of Gabrán, although, as Thurneysen shows, they are almost certainly one and the same.

Probably the main importance of *Scéla Cano* lies in the fact that it contains a near prototype of the story of Tristan and Isolt. While it is true that the Cano story lacks certain elements present in its more famous relative, among them the motive of the love-potion, still the basic theme of love reciprocated by the young wife of an old husband and a younger and valorous man, together with the tragic death of the two lovers through a misunderstanding while within view of each other, is so essentially similar in both tales that a close connection must be assumed[1]. A verbal link is provided by the name of Créd's father, Marcán, which, relieved of its diminutive, becomes the Mark of the Tristan story. It is also important to remember that a number of the features of the Tristan story which are absent from *Scéla Cano* are nevertheless found in other Irish tales of a similar nature[2];

1. Cf. Thurneysen, Zeit. rom. Phil. XLIII, 385; ZCP XVI, 281: Loth Acad. des Inscrs. et Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus, 1924, pp. 122-34; Dillon, Cycle of the Kings, p. 79.

2. Cf. Gertrude Schoepperle, Tristan and Isolt, vol. II. Perhaps I may here comment on one doubtful element among her conclusions. She rejects the opinion expressed by Gaston Paris and Bédier that the *arc qui ne faut*, which Béroul says (l. 1752 ff.) was invented by Tristan, is a Celtic

nor have we any reason for assuming that *Scéla Cano* is the true representative of the Irish prototype, if we may for convenience use such a definite term, of the Tristan story — it is not even certain that it constitutes the only version of the Cano tale. The significance of this consideration will be made more obvious, I hope, by the material presented later in this article.

We have already some idea of the elements which constitute the basis of the early Irish tale — the entries in the annals or the events recorded by them, Cano of Scottish Dál Riata and the lady Créd, whom we may for the moment, in company with the story-teller, describe as the wife of a Connacht king. It is she who lays first claim to our attention, because her name is by no means unknown in the remainder of Irish literature. It occurs most frequently in bardic poetry in combinations such as *Clann Créidhe* (« The Children of C. ») and *Síol Créidhe* (« The Progeny of C. »), which are poetic circumlocutions signifying the men of Connacht. While she was regarded as ancestress of all, or most of, the Connacht families in general, she was regarded as ancestress of the O'Connors of that province in particular. In the Annals of Loch Cé, Aodh, the great-grandson of Cathal Croibhdhearg, is described as *Ua Crēidhe*, and this is supported by the following lines from the Lec. metrical version of the Banshenchas (211 b 39), which make her the mother of Muireadach mac Fergusa[1] and add by way of comment that from

trait (*op. cit.*, p. 315 ff.). Bédier had said of this invention of Tristan's *il suppose des récits merveilleux, perdus pour nous, où le héros était représenté comme un archer sans pareil* (*op. cit.*, II, 156). This remark is particularly significant in view of the fact that in *Scéla Cano* we are told that the hero never made an erring cast, while another hero of Irish tradition, Cael mac Crimthain, whose story I shall show in the following pages to be cognate with that of Cano, is credited with the same dexterity (see p. 392, n. 1 *infra*). These references would appear to give unexpected support to Bedier's opinion.

1. This is presumably the Muiredach Muillethan son of Fergus who died in 702 (AU): cf. Lec. 64 va 30; BB 96 f 31. His father is sometimes given as Muirgius, as for example Rawl. B. 502, 145 e 36. See Father Paul Walsh, Journ. Galway Arch. Soc. XVII, 133-4.

her are descended *Ī Chrēidi* (the descendants of Créd) who inhabit the plain of Cruachu:

Crēd ingen Guairi a Dūn Durlais
deigbean Fergais nār creach cill,
māthair Muiredaig cen mebail,
fir luireadaig lshleagaig thinn;
is uaithi hĪ Chrēidi ar clār Chruachan,
nī slān ō ruathar cach rind[1].

James Carney has taken note of Créd in the guise of ancestress and he remarks that « The Crédh referred to in Síol Créidhe, though generally regarded as a daughter of Guaire, must originally have been thought of as belonging to a much more remote period; otherwise it would be difficult to regard her as ancestress of so many different families »[2]. This pertinent comment brings us to the heart of the matter, for the difficulty of Créd's historical date only arises when we assume that she herself was a historical character and, as such, needs to be anchored in a definite period.

For most people the name Créd probably calls to mind first of all the poem which is well known as a lament on the death of Dínertach the Munsterman[3]. In the single copy in which this poem has been preserved it is preceded by a brief introduction, which ascribes the poem to *Créda*, daughter of Guaire, and explains that she saw Dínertach, son of Guaire mac Nechtain of Uí Fidgenti, in the conflict at Aidne with seventeen wounds on the breast of his tunic, and that thereupon she fell in love with him and gave

1. Cf. the similar reference in the Lec. prose Banshenchas, 205 vb 32; RC XLVIII, 184.

2. Poems on the O'Reillys, p. 293f. He assumes that *Créidhe* (g.) is identical with *Craoidhe* (g.) in spite of the difficulty in reconciling them formally, since both names when preceded by the word *Síol* (« Progeny, descendants ») are used « in precisely the same way to indicate the same groups of families. »

3. Ed. Meyer, Ériu II, 15; on his interpretation of the poem, cf. p. 401 ff. inf.

voice to the lament which then follows. Meyer identifies the *tress Aidne* of the poem with the battle of Carn Conaill (AU 649), in which Diarmait mac Aeda Sláine defeated Guaire, and from which the text *Cath Cairn Chonaill*[1] takes its name. In the latter text there is no mention of Dínertach, but then its account of the actual battle is extremely brief and summary, and it contains none of the descriptions of particular episodes and characters familiar in the battle tales. It does, however, include Cúán mac Conaill, king of Uí Fidgenti, among those who came to Guaire's aid and who were slain in the battle, so that we may regard Dínertach as a follower of Cuán's who fought by the side of his king.

Now, the battle of Carn Conaill, it may be recalled, was brought within the orbit of Cano's activities by the tale of his exile from Scotland (cf. p. 384, *supra*), where we are told that he protected or spared Créd's home when he came with Diarmait to hold battle with Guaire. This reference is introduced into *Scéla Cano* without any forewarning or further elaboration, and there is no allusion, however tenuous, to Cano in the extant tale of the battle of Carn Conaill. The slender connection thus created between Cano and Dínertach helps to lay stress on the interesting similarity provided between their stories by the theme of *rográd fir alathire* (« Great love of a man from another land ») ,to quote the words of the poem. Most of all, it underlines the fact that Créd, as lover of both men, constitutes a basic link between their stories.

This story of Créd and Dínertach may be compared to another which occurs as an episode in *Acallam na Senórach*[2] and which I shall summarize here: Before the battle of Finntráig, Cael ua Nemnainn from the dewy fairy-

1. Ed. Stokes, ZCP III, 203 ; cf. Fragmentary Annals, SG I, 396ff. = II, 431ff.

2. Ed. Stokes, Ir. T. IV, i, ll. 742-868; ed. O'Grady, SG I, 110-13 = II, 119-21.

dwelling in the north *(as in brug braenach*[1] *atuaid)* came to Finn and his Fian. He told them that he had visited his foster-mother, Muirenn the daughter of Derg. When asked the reason for his visit, he explained that he intended to woo *Crédhe*, the daughter of Cairbre Cnesbán, king of Ciarraige Luachra. She was the most sought after of the women of Ireland, and few were the treasures that she had not won by her allurements. Her condition for every suitor was that he should be capable of composing for her a poem describing adequately her house and her prized possessions. Such a poem Cael had obtained from his foster-mother Muirenn.

Finn and his companions then accompanied Cael to Crédhe's *sid* (« fairy-dwelling ») at Loch Cuire in the west of Ireland. When they approached and sang the *dord fiansa*, fair full-grown maidens appeared on the ramparts, while Crédhe herself came, accompanied by three fifties of women, to speak to the visitors. Finn informed her that they were seeking her hand for Cael ua Nemnainn (here described as « the son of the king of Leinster from the east »). « I have heard tidings of him, although I have not seen him, and has he got my poem for me? », said Crédhe. Then Cael recited the poem, which is a very readable description of the pleasant and beautiful things contained in Crédhe's dwelling, here stated to be in the mountains called Cícha Anann, which other texts place in Irluachair (or in Luachair) in the east of Co. Kerry. Crédhe and Cael were wedded, and, after a feast lasting seven days, she went with Cael and the rest of the Fian to attend to their needs during the battle of Finntráig.

On the last day of the battle, however, Cael was drowned in the sea. His body was taken and buried on the shore south of Finntráig, whence comes the name Tráigh Caeil. Overcome with sorrow Credhe exclaimed, « Why should

1. This is a standing epithet for Brug maic ind Óc in *Acallam na Senórach* and elsewhere. Cf. Ériu III, 162: *Ocus do imigh iarsin gusan mbrúgh mbraenach mbrecsholus, 7 is ann robi Aenghus.*

I not die of grief for my husband, when the ever-active animals of the wild are so dying? » Then she uttered a lament for Cael (in which he is referred to as « the son of Crimthan ») and laid herself by his side and died.

It is scarcely necessary to stress the similarity between this episode and the story of Créd and Cano[1], and more especially between it and the remnant of the Créd and Dínertach tale. This is a very clear indication that Créd, the daughter of Guaire, and Créd (Créidhe)[2], the daughter of Cairbre Cnesbán, are really one and the same, and, as we shall see later (p. 399 f., *infra*), there is further evidence to prove this. Assuming for the moment that it is so, it is clear that the story of Cael supports my earlier suggestion that it is wrong to worry overmuch as to whether the historical connections assigned to Créd are consistent, since she was not originally a historical character. Here she belongs to the people of the *síd*, the Otherworld or fairy folk, and the whole account is directed towards emphasizing the fact that she was not a mortal. It calls to mind the passage in the early Mod. Ir. *Eachtra Airt maic Cuinn* which tells how Art, in the course of his journey to the Otherworld comes to an island in the middle of which he finds a house « thatched with the wings of birds, white and purple, and within it a company of fair and eternally beautiful women, forming the entourage of Crēidhe Fírálaind, the daughter of Fidhach Foltlebhar[3].

1. Note that the accomplishment of accurate aim is ascribed to both Cano and Cael. About Cael we read the comment *ór nir dhibraic a lám urchar n-imroill riam*, « for his hand never cast an erring shot ». (ed. Stokes l. 214; S. Gad. I, 99), and this is almost echoed with reference to Cano in *ar nī rotheilc imroll riam*, « for he never made an erring cast » (Anecd. I, 6). Cf. p. 387, n. 2, *supra*.

2. The several corruptions of the name Créd are due to the erratic adoption of its oblique cases as standard forms.

3. Ériu III, 164. Cf. these lines from the poem in the Acallam story of Cael:

A grianān ac Loch Cuire/d'arcat ocus d'ór bhuidhe,
luighi druimnech gan dochma/d'eitibh donna is dergchorcra

« Her sun-bower by Loch Cuire, of silver and of yellow gold: its ridged thatching is laid without defect, of brown and crimson-red birds' wings. »

The description of this Otherworld dwelling resembles so closely that of the other *sid* which the *Acallam* tale places in the mountains of Kerry, that they must be regarded merely as variants, and the Créidhe of this early Mod. Ir. text is evidently to be taken as yet another reflection of the same immortal Créd whose acquaintance we have made in the tales already discussed.

The next tale to be considered is that which gives an account of the tragic love of Cú Coingelt, given as the son of Eogan Bél and brother of the holy Cellach, and Gelgéis, daughter of Guaire. This narrative, which forms part of *Cailhreim Cellaig*[1] (dating from *c.* 1200), may be summarized as follows:

After the murder of his brother Cellach had been brought about through Guaire's treachery, Muiredach son of Eogan Bél[2] set out to visit him, being completely unaware of his death. While on the way he and his followers were attacked by a monster on the *coingelt* (« grazing land ») between Loch Con and Loch Cuilind. After a great struggle Muiredach slew the monster and on account of his feat was given the name Cú Coingelt. When he found his brother's body he mourned him and buried him — this accompanied by a miraculous intervention of oxen, which has its parallels in the lives of the saints. He then gathered his forces and went to Marcán mac Cillíni, king of Uí Maine and Medraide, with whom he remained for a year. Marcán then regretfully requested him to

1. Ed. Mulchrone, l. 521ff.; ed. O'Grady, SG I, 57ff. The LB text which is that of the latter edition, represents an earlier version than that of the former edition. They do not ,however, vary sufficiently in content to render it necessary to give them separate considcration here.

2. On Eogan Bél and his double, Eogan Srem, see Father Paul Walsh's article. Journ. Galway Arch. Soc. XVII, 129-30, 143; also O'Rahilly, Hist. & Myth., p. 398. Although most of the regnal lists attach Eogan Bél to the Uí Briúin, O'Rahilly holds that he was probably of the Uí Fhiachrach. Thus he sees in the Muiredach of CC who succeeds his father Eogan Bél as head of the Uí Fhiachrach, the original of the Muiredach Mál (son of Eogan Srem) of the Uí Briúin genealogy (*op. cit.*, pp. 398, 403-4).

leave, being afraid of drawing Guaire's anger upon himself. Cú Coingelt went to Tara, where he was welcomed by Bláthmac and Diarmaid, sons of Aed Sláine and joint kings of Ireland. While there he fell in love with Aífe, Bláthmac's daughter, but their attachment was known only to a few.

One day while he was playing chess with her father, she saw that he was losing and showed him a winning move, and it was through this that Bláthmac discovered their secret. He forgave them, however, and, although his daughter was sought by many nobles, he gave her to Cú Coingelt. They were wedded and remained happy together until one night, when they were conversing together, Aífe reproached her husband for not avenging his brother Cellach. Next morning Cú Coingelt arose early and, having summoned his followers together secretly, he set off for Connacht in spite of Bláthmac's protestations. Meanwhile, Aífe had rued her taunt, for, she lamented, once the women of Connacht had seen him they would fall in love with him, and he would never return.

After journeying across Connacht, Cú Coingelt came to Tír Amalgaid, which territory had been his own personal property. There he chanced upon a friendly swineherd, whose information and assistance enabled him to slay the four clerics who had murdered Cellach at Guaire's behest and been given the territory as payment for their crime. Cú Coingelt then took over the kingship of Uí Amalgaid and Uí Fhiachrach, while Guaire held Tír (Uí) Fiachrach Aidne, and soon fierce warfare broke out between them.

It so happened, however, that Geilgéis, Guaire's daughter, was in love with Cú Coingelt and because of her love had never consented to go to any other man. Cú Coingelt sought her of Guaire, and, through force of circumstances but not through choice, the latter agreed to their marriage, on condition that Cú Coingelt came to Guaire's dwelling for the wedding. This he refused to do and war was renewed between them. But finally peace was restored as

they became exhausted by the struggle, and the lovers were united. Guaire did not forget his enmity, however, and proceeded to set a snare for his daughter's husband. Through the well-meaning mediation of St. Ciarán he promised Cú Coingelt the kingship, if only he would come to Guaire's residence. Geilgéis added her voice to Ciarán's and sought to persuade her husband that no ill could come of his journey, and so, in spite of his forebodings, he set off for Durlas. There Guaire consummated his ancient hatred by having Cú Coingelt put to death[1].

To me it seems clear that the tale of Cú Coingelt and Geilgéis existed prior to *Caithréim Cellaig*, and that it was a separate piece grafted on to the story of Cellach

1. Both versions (cf. p. 393, n. 1, *supra*) of *Caithréim Cellaig* end with a long concluding poem immediately preceded by another poem of three quatrains spoken by Cú Coingelt in which he expresses his fears about the outcome of his journey, but resolves to go nevertheless. In LB, which represents the older version, a prose passage has been added in the margin telling briefly, how Guaire pledged his friendship with Cú Coingelt in Ciarán's presence, but then had him killed after the saint had left Durlas. More likely than not this prose has been composed by the scribe to fill an obvious gap between the two poems and to give the story the ending which it lacks. At least, it adds nothing that we could not infer from the rest of the text. That the incomplete nature of the tale was noted by the scribe is clear from his comment after copying the shorter poem: *Oigead Chon Coin[g]elt iarom cen fadbail 7 ni dar ndeóin* (« Through no fault of ours the account of the killing of Cú Coingelt cannot be found »). It is clear then that the prototype of the two extant versions of the tale lacked a proper ending, and, as Dr. Mulchrone points out (p. XVIII of her edition), this prototype may have been the original version of the complete tale of Cellach and Cú Coingelt (Against this it might be argued that the concluding poem associates Bréinaind and [Colmán] mac Duach with Ciarán in his unhappy mediation, although neither of these two are mentioned in the preceding text).

With regard to the longer poem, which must have ended the parent version, it has all the appearance of a composite work. The first part, constituting more than half of the poem, is devoted solely to Eogan Bél and begins *Fás anocht aitreb Éogain*. That this was originally a separate poem is indicated by the *dúnad* provided by the final repetition of the first line. Evidently the author of *Caithréim Cellaig* had taken a poem about Eogan Bél, added a quatrain on Cellach, and completed it by a summary of Cú Coingelt's betrayal and death.

(We have no certainty, it must be pointed out, that the history of the part of the text proper to Cellach, in the approximate form in which it is preserved, extends further back than the writing of *Caithréim Cellaig*. As far as we are concerned this point is not of very great importance). The explanation of how the hero got the name Cú Coingelt would have provided the compiler with a neat way of introducing a tale which was originally independent of the preceeding narrative. The union was accomplished with more ingenuity than is usually shown in such cases, but it was not perfect. In the first place a casual reading of CC gives the impression that the text falls into two distinct sections, and such a general impression is often significant. But there is more definite evidence[1]. After the exploit whence he is re-named, Muiredach finds his brother's body and gives voice to a poem on this subject. In two of its quatrains (ll. 568-75 ed. Mulchrone) he laments the fact that he is without a sister in the land of Ireland and Scotland, that his mother and father are dead and that God has left him without a brother. Except for Geilgéis and Conall mac Eochaid he can think of no one who has kindness and love for him. Now Conall has just been mentioned and described as Muiredach's *comalla* (« foster-brother ») in the passage telling of the encounter with the monster, but Geilgéis has not been named so far and is not referred to again for another three hundred lines of the text (until l. 873). Therefore, when she is first named we have no idea who she is or what associations she has with the hero. This sort of inconsequential reference might possibly be accepted in an O. I. text, but not in one dating from *c.* 1200 — that is, unless the text be a compilation. In this particular case I suggest either that the writer of CC has, in reducing the Cú Coingelt story to a subordinate position

1. At the outset it should be mentioned that the youthful sons of Eogan Bél (+ 543, 547 AU) cannot have been contemporaries of Guaire (+ 663) and Bláthmac (+ 665).

within the Cellach story, omitted a passage which would make his reference to Geilgéis relevant and intelligible, or else that he has attempted to cement the union of the two sections by anticipating the later episode of the love between her and Cú Coingelt.

Another piece of evidence is the name of the hero acquired as a result of his exploit. We are told that the monster attacked his company on the *coingell* (« grazing land ») between two lakes and that he slew it after a long and fierce struggle, most of which took place in one of the lakes. For his achievement in slaying *cú na coingeilti* (« the hound of the grazing-land ») he was then called Cú Coingelt[1]. Now, apart from the fact that the episode as we have it does not explain adequately why the hero got such a name (for example it would appear from the narrative itself that the loch was the true abode of the monster and that the *coingell* was only of secondary importance), there is the question of how we should interpret the name. The word *coingell*, whether it means « grazing-land » (Meyer, Contribb.) or is a compound of *cú* and *gell* (« madman » etc.) is a fem. noun. If the story in CC had any meaning, we should expect the gen. sing., i. e. Cú Coingeilte. On the other hand, the actual MS. form must be either gen., or else the nom. sing. used in apposition to *Cú*. In either case it cannot be reconciled with the explanation offered by CC. This type of forced explanation, arrived at if need be by ignoring the most obvious demands of grammar is typical of the literary trend which resulted in the striking expansion of *dindshenchas* in the twelfth century, and so it tends to confirm my view that during that century an independant tale of Cú Coingelt was adapted to form part of a longer tale, which was to be the story of Cellach.

1. The editor has, perhaps correctly, generalized the form Cú Choingelt, with lenition of the initial of the second word against the general MS. evidence.

The mutual relationship of the Irish texts.

Once we isolate the tale of Cú Coingelt and Geilgéis as it stands in CC, we cannot but see that it runs largely parallel to the story of Cano mac Gartnáin: Cano (Cú Coingelt)[1] is forced to go into exile and is loved by a daughter of Diarmait (Bláthmac), son of Aed Sláine, while he is staying with the brothers. He spends a while with Marcán, king of Uí Maine[2] (in Cú Coingelt's case this

1. Note the semantic connection between *Cú* (« hound, wolf ») and *Cano* (« wolf-cub, whelp », cf. Meyer, Contribb.). Hennessy, in a note to AU 704 (= 705), says that Cano was also called Cú Garbh and Cano Garbh. For the latter see p. 31 *supra*, but I cannot recall what instances he may have had of the former.

2. In *Scéla Cano* Marcán's domain is not expressly stated, but since Créd describes herself as being in *Mainmag*, perhaps we can infer that he belonged to Tír Maine (cf. Onom. *s. v. Mag Main*). The Marcán in CC is styled *ri Ó Maine 7 Medraide*. He is given as the son of Cilline (cf. Rawl. B. 502, 120 ba 13: *...m. Faebuirdatha m. Marcáin m. Cilline m. Rónáin m. Sinill m. Conaill m. Con-chongall m. Finnchada m. Garrchon m. Folhaid m. Echach Lámdeirg m. Mesin Corb 7rl.*), although, it may be noted, his parentage is not given in LB, which is the older version. In the hitherto unpublished *Imthechla na dá nÔinbhidhe* in MS. B IV 1 a Marcán mac Tomáin, « the son of the king of Uí Maine », is associated with Guaire (Since I have not at present access to the MS. I cite from the Mod. Ir. version in O Cadhlaigh's *Guaire an Oinigh*, p. 137) and it is he that the Lec. prose Banshenchas names as the husband of Créd, thereby identifying him with the Marcán of *Scéla Cano*. Lec. 205 vb 32: *Cred i. Guairi Aigne mathair Muireadaig meic Fhergusa 7 is uaithi adearar hI Chreidi re sil Muireadaig. Ba bean dano do Marcan mac Thomain do rig hUa Maine in Chreda sin* (« That C. was also the wife of M. mac T., the king of Uí Maine ») 7 *ba leandan di Cana mac Gartain rig Alban ar tus ... Geilges i. Guairi Aidne ben Chon Coingelt meic Eogain. Buach i. Illaind meic Scandlain ri Iarmuman, ben Chana meic Gartan rig Alban*). Perhaps some support for this identification is provided by the fact the annals record Marcán mac Tomáin's death in the battle of Connacht at Airther Seola (AU 652 = 653) and that FM and CS refer to him as king of Uí Maine.

It is strange that Sanas Cormaic § 26 (cf. Bruchstücke § 93) should preserve for us a quatrain on another Marcán attributed to Guaire:

Do-celat mór n-amra ind arléni
bite for ligiu Marcáin maicc Aeda maicc Marléni

i. e. « Much that is wonderful do the little stones conceal which are on the grave of Marcán son of Aed son of Marléne. » The only Marcán mac Aeda

precedes his visit to Diarmait and Bláthmac). On going (returning) to Connacht he promptly forgets the first lady, but wins the daughter (Créd, Geilgéis) of Guaire and finally comes to a tragic end through the hostile endeavours of his wife's men-folk. This bald summary is sufficient to show that the story of Cano and Créd is closely related to that of Cú Coingelt and Geilgéis, but to define this relationship is rather more complicated. Going by the age of the texts in which the stories are preserved it might seem natural to assume that the tale of Cú Coingelt represents an adaptation of that of Cano. But, as we shall see later, to do so would put us in the face of certain very real difficulties.

Fisrt, let us examine more closely one of the points which differentiate the tales, that is, the name of the heroine. Here we have two narratives which run more or less parallel, but the heroine in one is Créd, daughter of Guaire, and in the other Geilgéis, daughter of Guaire. Already (p. 390 ff. *supra*) we have noticed the story of Créd — given as daughter of Cairbre Cnesbán, king of Ciarraige Luachra — and Cael as it is told in the account of the battle of Finntráig in *Acallam na Senórach*. In the later compilation entitled *Cath Finntrága* there is a second version of that story[1], containing the same poetic lament less a couple of verses, but in the oldest MS., Rawl. B. 487 (15th. cent.), the heroine is *Geilgheis ingen mic Lugach*[2]. The later MSS. (18th. and 19th. cents.), which give only a summary account, make Créd the

that I know of is one who is descended from Fiacha Fidgeinte (Rawl. B. 502, 152 a 39), but his grandfather is given as Fiachra.

1. Ed. Meyer, 1.953 ff. There are also a couple of allusions in *Duanaire Finn*, one to the fact Caol mac Crimthain was buried at Finntráig (II, 86 § 74) and the other to Créidhe daughter of Cairbre as being the wife of Caol ua Neamhnainn, whose mother was Aoiffe, daughter of Trénmhór from the east (II, 108 § 30).

2. Cf. Duanaire Finn III, index *s. vv. Caol* [*Ródha*] *mac Criomthain* and *Mac Lughach*, where Gerard Murphy points out that there is some confusion of these two characters in the lays.

heroine[1]. This leads to but one reasonable conclusion: that there were two versions of this tale which were distinguished signally by the heroine's names. Whether one version is substantially older than the other is a matter of doubt — and is perhaps irrelevant in any case. We might as well speculate on the comparative historicity of Créd and Gelgéis, when they are treated as daughters of Guaire, king of Connacht in the seventh century. But this leads back to the tales of Cano and Cú Coingelt. There again we have two tales which are basically similar, but have different heroines, though in this case the ladies are given the same parentage. There again I think we must regard the two versions or tales as being by and large contemporary[2]. All we can do is compare the extant forms with each other and with other texts from the point of view of their content, to see if this will offer us any indication of their respective stages of development.

This is especially important in view of the fact, mentioned above, that *Scéla Cano* preserves a tale with very striking points of similarity to the story of Tristan and Isolt. If, as I have suggested, there is reason to hold that the tale of Cú Coingelt is not based at second-hand upon that of Cano, then it is of the greatest interest for any study of the development which led up to the medieval French tale to find out how the two Irish tales differ. Even if we assume for the moment that the Cano story is the source of the Cú Coingelt story, we have no evidence to show that the latter derives from the version contained in *Scéla Cano*, and, consequently, it is advisable to examine CC and *Scéla Cano* side by side.

One big difference between CC and *Scéla Cano* is that the latter makes Marcán the husband of Créd, while the former

1. According to Meyer, (*op. cit.*, p. VII f.), the fourteen paper copies of *Cath Finntrága* all represent a different version from that of Rawl. B. 487, one of the points of difference being, that they omit the account of Geilgéis seeking her husband's body among the slain, as well as her lament.

2. Cf. the similar cases discussed pp. 364, 381, *supra*.

does not. This is a matter of some importance, since the fact that the heroine's elderly husband is called Marcán in *Scéla Cano* constitutes one of the links between it and Tristan. At first sight it certainly would seem that *Cú Coingell*[1] here derives from *Cano*[1], since Marcán does not perform any essential function in the former, and it could be argued that he has been borrowed into *Cú Coingéil* without any attempt at preserving the real reason for his inclusion in the earlier tale. On the other hand there are certain considerations which compel us to hesitate before accepting this explanation. In *Scéla Cano* it is remarkable how insignificant a part Marcán really plays in the development of the story, while the most important incident in the text, that which results in Cano promising to return to Créd, is set, not in Marcán's undefined residence, but in that of Guaire at Derlus. This may indicate that Guaire was originally the central figure of the tale apart from the lovers, although it is true that it may also have a more pedestrian explanation.

Meyer's interpretation of Créd's song.

I shall now return for a moment to the poem on Dínertach attributed to Créd (cf. p. 389 f. *supra*). When discussing it above I did not stop to question Meyer's interpretation of a poem of which the emotion is more immediately obvious than the sense. But there are a couple of important points in which his interpretation appears to me to be incorrect. In the first place it is fairly certain that there existed at one time a tale dealing with the background to which the poem belongs. The poem may in fact have been detached from the tale. This would explain the allusive manner of its verses. The brief prose introduction which has been prefixed to them may reflect the tale faithfully — in any case we have no reason

1. I shall use these forms to refer to the Cú Coingelt — Geilgéis and Cano — Créd stories in general ,without reference to particular versions.

to believe otherwise. It says that Créd fell in love with Dínertach after seeing him in the conflict at Aidne with seventeen wounds on the breast of his tunic. Almost certainly this has coloured Meyer's reaction to the poem, which he reads as a lament by Cred on the death of the hero. As far as I can see, his only substantial support for so reading is the use of the adjective *lec[h]tach* in § 7 with reference to Dínertach. Even if we assume with Meyer that it does refer to Dínertach, his translation as « (now) sunk into the grave » has much more assurance than the Irish warrants, for it is extremely doubtful whether the adjective could have anything like such a sense, and normally it is used of places rather than persons with the meaning « abounding in (famous) graves ». In actual fact this is almost certainly its meaning in our poem, and Meyer's unwarranted translation has been forced upon him because he has misconstrued the rest of the line in which it stands. In his edition this line stands as *Ān breō des luimnech lec[h]tach* and is translated as « glorious flame, lovely, mantled, (now) sunk into the grave ». In reality, the word *des* is not an adjective, but a nominal preposition followed, not by another adjective, but by the place-name *Luimnech.* Therefore, Meyer's translation should be emended to read « glorious is the flame to the south of Luimnech abounding in graves ». This agrees perfectly with the prose introduction which describes Dínertach as belonging to Uí Fidgente, a people who occupied an area in the south of the county.

In the first couplet of the first stanza there is a reference to Cell Cholmáin, and this, Meyer suggests, is an allusion to Dínertach's burial there[1]. But this preconceived

1. Cf. Meyer's « Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry », p. 63: « He (Dínertach) died ,and was buried in the cemetery of Colman's Church. » This was a simplification of his earlier suggestion — forced upon him by his attitude to the text — that the funeral chant for Dínertach was sung at Cell Cholmáin and that he was buried at Irluachair. The couplet in question reads, *Canair a n-īath Aidne āin / im ī[h]aobu Cilli Colmāin*, and Meyer's translation, « There is singing in the meadow of glorious Aidne around the

interpretation would contradict the preceding stanza (§ 6) which is as follows:

Tālhum cech maith la Gūairi
lie rīg nAidne n-adfūaire:
locair mo menma ōm thūalhaib
isin iath i nIrluachair[1].

The sense of this surely is that Créd, having seen Dínertach wounded in the battle of Carn Conaill, fell in love with him and, now that he has returned home, yearns for his presence. This becomes clear when we consider that the territory of Uí Fidgenti appears to have extended into Irluachair (cf. Hogan, Onom., *s. vv. Uí Fidgente* and *Irlóchir).*

We have now seen that Créd's poem contains no allusion to Dínertach's death, unless we read such into it. But to do so is to contradict the basic idea of the poem, Créd's longing to go away from her home to her lover in Irluachair. Nor is it easy to reconcile with the prose introduction, since this would imply that Créd fell in love with Dínertach as he was on the point of death. A story of such a short-lived love is possible in Irish literature, but scarcely probable.

However, to say that the poem is not concerned with Dínertach's death does not mean that the same is true of the tale from which it comes. On the contrary, it is extremely likely that Dínertach met a tragic death, as did Cael, Cano and Cú Coingelt. I should go still further and suggest, because of the obvious connections in setting

sides of Cell Cholmáin ». A better approximation might be, « It is sung (proclaimed) in the land of glorious Aidne all around Cell Cholmáin », this being elaborated in the second couplet. This does not warrant us painting any mental picture of a funeral procession.

1. Meyer's translation, slightly emended, runs: « I have every good with Guaire, the king of cold Aidne; (but) my mind seeks to go (for Meyer's « has fallen away ») from my people to the land in Irluachair ». For the correction cf. R. I. A. contribb. *s. v. tocraid*, « desires to go, seeks a way », which reference I owe to the kindness of Professor Dillon.

and characters and the general similarities in contents, that his story is cognate with the stories of the latter two of these heroes. In this connection it may be recalled that I drew attention earlier (p. 390, *supra*) to the fact that *Scéla Cano* seems to associate Cano with the battle of Carn Conaill. It says that he spared Créd's home when he came with Diarmait to hold battle with Guaire. As I pointed out, this statement stands rather isolated in the text, which nowhere gives the impression that Cano had been in Ireland, not to mention being present at the battle of Carn Conaill[1]. In the story of Dínertach, on the other hand, the hero's participation in the battle of Carn Conaill is obviously an integral part of the narrative, so that the question poses itself immediately: Does the passage in *Scéla Cano* derive from a version of the Dínertach story, and, if so, does this indicate that the latter may be the source of Cano?[2]

Having succeeded, I hope, in showing that the tale of Dínertach belongs to the same stem as *Cano*, and also that there is no evidence for supposing that it is a later off-shoot from *Cano* itself, we may now return to our comparison of the latter tale with *Cú Coingelt*. I there (p. 400 f., *supra*) pointed out that *Cú Coingelt*, and even *Cano* to a certain extent could give the impression that it was originally Guaire, Créd's father, not Marcán, her husband,

1. Just before this *Scéla Cano* tells us that « she (Créd) had loved him even before he had come across from the east ». Going by general usage in early Irish literature one would take this to be an example of *grád écmaise*, love of one who is absent or is known and loved only through his reputation. The writer of *Scéla Cano* may have adopted a more prosaic interpretation, which would necessitate an explanation of how Créd and Dínertach had previously become acquainted. But why did he choose the battle of Carn Conaill?

2. Thurneysen would date the original redaction of *Scéla Cano* at or shortly after 900. According to Meyer Créd's song probably belongs to the tenth century, but the material from which to derive a dating is here very limited. In any case these dates need not, and almost certainly would not, refer to the earliest forms of both tales.

who became the enemy of the hero, like King Mark in *Tristan and Isolt*. This is supported by the Dinertach poem which shows that, in the poem to which it was attached, Créd was living with Guaire when she fell in love with the hero[1]. For us this detail is important, since, once it is accepted, it provides further confirmation of *Cú Coingelt's* independence in respect of *Scéla Cano* and adds further value to our comparison of the two tales.

The Irish tales and Tristan.

We saw from the beginning that *Scéla Cano* did not necessarily represent the earliest version of the Cano tale. We have evidence which suggests that *Cú Coingelt*, though similar, does not derive from *Scéla Cano*. We have grounds for believing that *Cú Coingelt* and *Cano* belonged to a group of several tales of a common type and of more or less parallel development. The most satisfactory conclusion to be drawn from all the foregoing is that *Cú Coingelt* is independent of *Cano* and may possess elements which have been lost or altered in *Scéla Cano*, or alternatively, but less likely, that *Cú Coingelt* derives from an earlier version of *Cano* than is represented by *Scéla Cano*. Whichever we choose, it is obvious that we cannot ignore *Cú Coingelt* when studying *Scéla Cano*, and also — since it has close connections with the later text — the story

1. Before leaving the point I should mention that I have always felt some doubt about the precise mutual relationship ascribed to Créd and Guaire in the poem attributed to the former. Certainly the prose introduction makes her Guaire's daughter, but always, when reading the poem I have found myself hesitating over the first couplet of § 6 (quoted p. 403, *supra*). When expressing her desire of going away to Irluachair, she says, « I have every good with Guaire, the king of cold Aidne ». To my mind the use of the preposition *la* in *la Guairi* gives the impression that Créd was Guaire's wife. For an example of such usage cf. *Scéla Cano*, Anecd. I, 6, l. 14: *co rangadar tech Marcain lasmbai Cred ingen Guaire*. However, this is merely an impression without any other evidence to support it. I only mention it lest other relevant material should by any chance come to hand.

of Tristan and Isolt[1]. However, before making comparisons with Tristan I wish to emphasize that any views I express in this regard are not to be taken as the fruits of absolute conviction, but rather as suggestions set forth for the benefit of those better qualified to judge their worth in the light of their own studies of the Tristan romance.

For the person reading Tristan for the first time, the fact that the hero had a wife, the second Isolt, comes as a surprise and something of a disillusionment. Much has been written of her and theories have been propounded to explain how she originated. According to Joseph Loth the two Isolts probably came about « de la juxtaposition en Cornwall des deux legendes, cornique et armoricaine, et d'un compromis entre les deux »[2], while Gertrude Schœpperle holds that such an explanation is unnecessary and that « The popularity in the twelfth century, of the story commonly refered to as that of *The husband with two wives*, and the occurrence, in several contemporary romances, of similar psychological treatments of it, sufficiently account for the second Isolt of the Tristan romance »[3]. It seems rather strange that, to my knowledge, no one has thought it worthy of consideration that in *Scéla Cano* there is a second lady — the daughter of

1. Cf. the relevant comment of Joseph Loth (Acad. des Inscripts., Comptes Rendus, 1923, p. 126: « On peut assurément regretter que la saga indépendante (i. e. as opposed to the version included in *Scéla Cano*) dont le sujet était les amours tragiques de Cred et Cano, ne nous ait pas été conservée ; on serait fondé à supposer qu'elle nous aurait offert d'autres rapprochements avec le roman de Tristan et Iseut ». While avoiding judgement on the question of an independent saga of *Cano*, it will be clear that the object of our present comparisons is to re-riscover some of the information of which Loth deplores the loss.

2. Contributions à l'étude des Romans de la Table Ronde, p. 110.

3. Tristan and Isolt, p. 528. On the other hand this has to be taken together with her view that « The service to Howel of Brittany whose daughter Tristan received as a reward was probably a traditional exploits; the redactor of the *estoire* was too conservative to reject it » (*op. cit.*, I, 160).

Diarmait mac Aeda Sláine — who « was in love with Cano for the tales told of him even before he came over (from Scotland) ». Perhaps it is because the text here treats the love-element brusquely and shows no response by Cano to the lady's advances. If, however, we turn to CC, we find that the corresponding episode, with Cú Coingelt and the daughter of Bláthmac mac Aeda Sláine, is treated purely as a love-affair. To ignore this second lady of the Irish hero while looking elsewhere for the origin of the second Isolt is not easy to explain.

One difference between *Scéla Cano* and the Tristan romance in this connection is that the episode dealing with Tristan's marriage to the second Isolt comes in the middle of the story of his tragic love for the queen[1], whereas in the Irish tale the corresponding episode comes before Cano has met Créd. If we turn to CC we find that the position is not so clear. I have already (p. 396, *supra*) noted how Geilgéis is given passing mention in l.572 in a poem put in the mouth of Cú Coingelt and then is not referred to again until l.873, where her story is introduced bluntly with « *Is amlaid do bhí Geilgéis ingen Guaire, 'na leannán grádach do Choin Choingelt mac Eógain óir nír fhaem sí feis ré fer eili riam ré grád-san*[2]. There can be little doubt that something has been altered or omitted here when the story of Geilgéis and Cú Coingelt was used in the composition of CC. In the extant text the general cause of the enmity between Guaire and Cú Coingelt is political and the immediate cause is the murder of Cellach, brother of the latter. Since, however, the Geilgéis-Cú Coingelt tale was originally distinct and independent, these causes are not necessarily relevant, and the primary

1. Cf. Bédier, Le Roman de Tristan par Thomas II, 265 ff. For convenience I shall generally refer to Bédier's reconstruction of *Le Poème Primitif*, *op. cit.*, II, 194 ff.

2. « As it happened, Geilgéis daughter of Guaire was the devoted lover of Cú Coingelt son of Eogan, for, because of her love for him, she never consented to sleep with another man ».

one may have been simply the love of the hero and the heroine. This, coupled with the early incongruous reference to Geilgéis in CC, might mean that in *Cú Coingelt* the second love-affair was embedded in the first, as in Tristan. It may also be worth noting that in CC, as opposed to *Scéla Cano*, the hero marries the second lady, again in conformity with Tristan.

As I have just pointed out, one consequence of CC's composite character is that we cannot be sure how *Cú Coingelt* originally opened; whether certain details belonged to it or to the other material employed, or whether they were introduced by the compiler. I have tried to show (p. 397, *supra*) that the episode describing how Cú Coingelt slew the monster does not, as presented in CC, really fulfill its purpose of explaining how he got his name. Grammatically the explanation cannot be reconciled with the form of his name, and from the point of view of content it would appear that the loch was the real scene of the struggle, and not the *coingelt* (« grazing-land »). Our problem is to decide whether the compiler of CC himself introduced this exploit to provide a somewhat unsatisfactory explanation of the hero's name, or whether he adapted it from one contained in *Cú Coingelt*. There is scarcely any evidence to aid us, but it is tempting to choose the second alternative and to relate this episode to Tristan's fight against the dragon[1]. However that may be — and it must be admitted that a combat with a dragon or a monster is too common to furnish a connection between tales — the implications inherent in such a possibility are worth considering.

One of the names of the Tristan romance which have not been satisfactorily explained is that of the *Morholt*, the Irish champion whom Tristan slays in single combat[2]. It is commonly accepted that it includes Celtic **mori* (Ir. *muir*, « the sea »), and that the character who bears

1. Bédier, *op. cit.*, II, 218 ff.; Schoepperle, *op. cit.*, 18 ff.
2. Bédier, *op. cit.*, I, 71 ff.

it in the Tristan romance has been rationalized or humanized from his original state, which was that of a monster or supernatural being connected with the sea[1]. Now if Cú Coingelt's combat with the monster in CC is an integral part of his story, it may be related to Tristan's combat with the Morholt. In that case the monster of CC may represent the prototype from which has evolved the Morholt, the uncle of Isolt. Moreover, this suggests a possible explanation of his name; that it is really a corruption of the Irish word *murgell (muirgeilt)*[2], « a sea-lunatic, a sea-fugitive or wanderer' (R. I. A. Contribb. *s. v. muir*). It is true that the known instances of this word all relate to the story of the mermaid Lí Ban (see Contribb. *loc. cit.*), but this does not by any means preclude its having had a more extended usage, comparable to the range of the simple word *geilt*, which may be said generally to indicate a person who goes wild and takes on certain characteristics of animals or birds. In favour of some explanation such as this is the fact that the name Morholt appears always to be preceeded by the definite article, implying that it was originally a common noun which through isolated usage came to be regarded as a proper noun (cf. AU 571 = 572, *In hoc anno capta est in muirgheilt*).

Students of the Tristan romance agree in regarding the gradual alteration in Mark's attitude to Tristan and Isolt as one of its important elements[3]. The king is loth to accept the growing evidence against Tristan and Isolt, and his suspicions must be aroused continually by Tristan's enemies, led by Andret the son of a sister of Mark's[4]. Once, however, his betrayal is confirmed beyond

1. Cf. Schoepperle, *op. cit.*, p. 326 ff.; Bédier, *op. cit.*, II, 135; Loth, Contribb. p. 29, n. 1, where he suggests that the name derives from old Celtic *mori-spolto-*, « celui qui fend les mers ».

2. The *g* is lenited.

3. With regard to the further changes wrought by Thomas on the king's character, cf. Bédier, *op. cit.*, II, 239 f., 259 ff.

4. Cf. Schoepperle, *op. cit.*, index, *s. v. Andret;* Bédier, *op. cit.* II, 245, 249, 253, 254, etc.

all doubt, he is relentless in his desire to punish the betrayers. In considering these facts it is worth keeping in mind that even from the bare unliterary outline of a tale given by *Scéla Cano* it is not Marcán, but his son Colgu, who is to the fore in harrying the hero and heroine. It is particularly interesting to compare CC, where Guaire's wrath is awakened and he is spurred on to bring about the death of the holy Cellach by his son Nár and his foster-son, Nemead mac Fir Choctha (11.223ff., 287ff.). As I have already pointed out, some elements of the Cellach section of CC probably belonged originally to *Cú Coingelt*. That under discussion may well be one of them, as the rough parallel between Marcán : Colgu and Guaire : Nár would seem to suggest. Now, CC is remarkable for giving an unusual picture of Guaire by presenting him as a cruel, scheming despot rather than as the legendary paragon of kingship and generosity who has become proverbial throughout Irish literature. If we are to believe CC the reason for this aberration is political, and perhaps we should simply leave it at that, although it is not really an explanation of Guaire's change of character. Yet, it is as well to point out that if, as I have argued on other grounds, Guaire's hatred of Cú Coingelt has a similar basis to Mark's hatred of Tristan — that is the young heroes' love for Geilgéis and Isolt respectively — then this Guaire is no more inconsistent with the normal kind and generous Guaire than is the « implacable » and « terrible » Mark inconsistent with the normal kind and generous Mark.

Whatever of this attempt to illuminate Guaire's part in *Cú Coingelt* from our knowledge of that played by Mark in *Tristan and Isolt* — and I should not like to lay too much emphasis on it — there is without doubt considerable similarity between the roles ascribed to Colgu, Nár, and Andret. In all three cases (making the necessary assumption with regard to CC) they are essential in bringing about the downfall of the hero.

There is another part of the story of Cú Coingelt which

must be added to the list of doubtful elements, and that is how exactly he met his death (cf. p. 395, n. 1, *supra*). Considering the evidence available it does not seem likely to have been similar to Cano's death in *Scéla Cano*, at least with regard to circumstances and situation. We know that Cú Coingelt went to Guaire, much against his own inclination. If left to our own devices we might suppose that he was slain by Guaire and that there was a tragic ending in which Geilgéis had a part similar to that of Créd in the story of Cael in the *Acallam* and *Cath Finntrága*. In the light of the known facts it seems the most likely sort of ending. What makes it especially interesting as a possible conclusion is that the French Prose Romance of Tristan has a tragic finale in which the hero is wounded by Mark with a poisoned sword and the two lovers die together in each other's embrace, and that Gertrude Schoepperle (unaware of *Scéla Cano*, it should be said) holds that the Prose Romance preserves in this ending « a tradition, if not older than that of the poems, at least independent of them »[1]. If her opinion is correct, is there then any connection between the supposed ending of *Cú Coingelt* and the variant ending of the Tristan story? This would seem to depend on whether there were variations as to the conclusion in the Tristan material whence the French texts derive[2].

Review of discussion of Scéla Cano.

It is unnecessary to retrace the various stages of our investigation of *Scéla Cano* and its connections. My object throughout was to show that this text could not be judged independently, because it represented but one of a number

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 439 and the following pages in which she elaborates her view.

2. In any case mention must be made of Joseph Loth's comment on Gertrude Schoepperle's suggestion (RC XXXV, 382): « *Elle va, contre toute vraisemblance, chercher le soi-disant dénouement primitif dans le roman de Tristan en prose, qui est, au point de vue des sources, dépourvu de la moindre valeur* ».

of inter-related tales, each of which, if extant, might help to undo alterations or make good omissions in the others. In the process I made some observations on the relevancy of these tales to the problem of the Tristan romance. However, my primary concern was with the heroine, Créd daughter of Guaire, or, as she is called in CC and in one version of the story of Cael, Geilgéis. I wished to show that there was no point in trying to fit her into the pattern of seventh century history, because she does not really belong to history. Under the name Créd she was regarded as the ancestress of *Clann Créidhe*, or the men of Connacht, and even from the material discussed in the preceding pages we can see that she was variously made the wife of Cano, Cael, Dínertach and Fergus, father of Muiredach. In some contexts even the obvious conclusion on our part is made unnecessary, since she is presented without any ambiguity as a goddess, or at least as the lady in authority over a *síd*. Therefore, when she comes before us in the guise of a daughter of Guaire, a seventh century king of Connacht, we know that she is no more historical than is, say, Ébliu (Éblenn), the eponym of the mountainous district called Sliab nÉblinne, who is given as daughter of Guaire from the Brug (i. e. *síd*) of Macc in Óc[1]. Perhaps the mention of this otherworld Guaire who was the father of Ébliu gives a hint as to how Créd became attached to his historical namesake, especially when we recall that Créd was given another father from the *síd* in Fidhach Foltlebhar and (presumably) Cairbre Cnesbán, and that *Cath Finntrága* gives Geilgéis as the daughter of Mac Lugach, who is probably originally identical with the god Lug.

Conclusion to Article II.

In the first of these articles I argued that Mór Muman represented a literary survival of the territorial goddess

1. Met. D. IV, 62-4 ; cf. LU, l. 2927 ff. ; S. Gad. I, 233.

and that she stood in the same relationship to the kingship of Munster as did Medb to the kingship of Ireland. There was an obvious objection to be expected to this argument, namely that Mór Muman was different from Medb and other such goddesses in that she belonged to the historical period and was surrounded by historical figures. Therefore, the main tales which I have discussed above, those of Deoch and Laidcnén, of Muirenn (Mis) and Dub Ruis and finally of Créd and Cano, were chosen because comparatively little investigation had been done on them previously and, more important, because they appeared to have considerable similarities to the story of Mór Muman and, like it, were set in the historical period. I feel that what we have got to know of these tales (which are well worthy of study on their own account) tends to confirm my interpretation of the Mór Muman story. It is clear from these other heroines — and from Créd in particular — that it was quite normal in the period when Irish literature was expanding most rapidly, for story-tellers to adapt to recent historical conditions certain ancient mythological patterns with their ancient goddess-heroines. In the case of Créd we happen to have especially clear evidence of this process; but if Créd and her tale (or group of tales) have been successfully inserted into seventh-century history, is there any inherent reason why the same could not be true of Mór Muman? The stories about Mis (Muirenn) and Deoch in their relationship to Munster and Connacht history serve to show how widespread was the trend of story-telling exemplified in the stories about Créd. To appreciate fully how this trend manifested itself in the literature which followed the seventh century — the melting-pot of Irish tradition — or even in the few tales discussed above, is to come closer to an understanding of the mental atmosphere in which that literature flourished.

(à suivre)